

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

ROOM 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 22, 2012
1:40 P.M.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN BASS
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCIL KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCIL MAJORITY LEADER CURTIS JONES
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA QUINONES-SANCHEZ

Resolution 120401: 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, and further authorizing
the Committee to recommend for
Council's consideration nominations
to be forwarded to the Mayor.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
2 afternoon. This is a public hearing
3 of the City Council Committee on
4 Parks, Recreation and Cultural
5 Affairs.

6 The purpose of this
7 public hearing is to hear testimony
8 on Resolution No. 120401.

9 I also want to take a
10 moment to recognize that we have the
11 presence of a quorum, and the
12 Committee in attendance are: Council
13 Member Kenyatta Johnson, Councilwoman
14 Maria Quinones-Sanchez and
15 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

16 Will the Clerk please read
17 the resolution, the title of the
18 resolution.

19 CLERK: Resolution 120401,
20 Resolution authorizing Council's
21 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
22 Cultural Affairs to hold public
23 hearings for applicants seeking
24 nomination to serve on the Commission
25 on Parks and Recreation, and further

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 authorizing the Committee to
3 recommend for Council's consideration
4 nominations to be forwarded to the
5 Mayor.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
7 you very much. I just want to thank
8 everyone for being here today and for
9 your patience. We are starting a
10 little bit late, but we are going to
11 try to move things right along.

12 Do any of the Council
13 members have any opening comments
14 they would like to make? Okay.
15 Councilman Johnson.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
17 want to thank everyone for showing up
18 today to provide your testimony as it
19 relates to your interest in the Parks
20 and Recs Commission. And so I am
21 looking forward to hearing your
22 testimony.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
24 BROWN: I want to echo the sentiments
25 and let you know that yesterday we

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 were both informed, enlightened,
3 inspired and saw opportunities where
4 members of this Committee believe
5 that there is still great opportunity
6 for work going forward. The good
7 news is that there is still a huge
8 mix of voices that care about the
9 preservation and sustainability of
10 our parks.

11 The sad news is that the
12 legislation was written in such a way
13 where at the end of the day we will
14 send "X" number of recommendations to
15 the Mayor under the leadership of
16 Chairwoman Bass. And then the Mayor
17 has the complicated responsibility to
18 appoint those members. So
19 irrespective of where you end up at
20 this process, our hope is that you
21 will remain engaged anyway.

22 That was from the discovery
23 we learned yesterday. There are a
24 lot of members that were actually
25 former candidates and they decided to

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 stay engaged anyway because they care
3 so much about our parks. So welcome
4 and thank you for offering testimony.
5 Councilwoman Sanchez.

6 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Just
7 to close out Councilwoman Blondell
8 Reynolds' comments on that. I am
9 strongly suggesting that all of you
10 who unfortunately cannot make that
11 list because at some point we will
12 narrow down the list, I strongly
13 encourage you to visit one of our
14 recreational facilities and become a
15 member of one of our advisory boards.
16 And I'm taking Mike McCrea's position
17 here because as president of the
18 Citywide advisory boards, I would
19 love to have any one of you become a
20 member of one of those Committees if
21 you are not already involved.

22 We absolutely need the
23 breadth or experience and the
24 commitment that all of you have
25 exercised. So I am glad I don't have

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 to make the final decision. But I
3 continue to be impressed about the
4 commitment of people to our system.
5 So I thank all of you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
7 you, Council Lady. And what we are
8 going to do now is lay out some of
9 the ground rules as to how we will
10 operate today.

11 We will ask you to come up
12 in groups of three. As stated in the
13 email, you will be limited to three
14 minutes for your remarks. We hope
15 that will be enough time. Council
16 staff will be collecting your written
17 testimony and letters of
18 recommendations as well as any other
19 pertinent information you wish to
20 have considered by the Committee.

21 We will have the first
22 three applicants whose names I will
23 call approach the witness table and
24 be seated. I will also call out the
25 names of the following group of

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 threes so that you may take seats
3 behind the first three for the sake
4 of expediency.

5 Prior to beginning your
6 testimony, please state your name for
7 the record and also remember that the
8 stenographer needs to both hear and
9 understand your testimony, as she's
10 taking it down.

11 And with that, we will
12 begin with the first three for today.
13 That list includes: Mr. Thurman
14 Martin, Samuel Mason and George
15 Matysik. Okay. And following them
16 we will have Mr. Fred Mauer, Mike
17 McCrea and Andrew I. Murray. Okay.
18 Please state your name and you can
19 begin your testimony.

20 MR. MARTIN: Yes. Thurman
21 Martin.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thurman
23 Martin.

24 MR. MARTIN: Yes. Good
25 afternoon.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
3 afternoon.

4 MR. MARTIN: I am Thurman
5 Martin, entrepreneur, youth advocate
6 and community activist. Over the
7 last two decades, I have also
8 developed a deep-rooted interest in
9 our parks, our youth centers as well
10 as our local libraries. Today I
11 speak as an advocate for community,
12 economic and youth development as
13 they pertain to this Council hearing.

14 As one of the City's small
15 business owners, I firmly believe in
16 creating viable job opportunities,
17 growing small to medium businesses,
18 and developing economies in
19 impoverished communities.

20 As a youth advocate, my
21 work focuses on instilling leadership
22 qualities and values among our youth,
23 creating jobs in which they can learn
24 and grow, and preparing these teens
25 and young adults to take their place

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2 with integrity and ethics in the
3 workforce. It is through this work
4 that I have seen the benefits of
5 mobilizing youth in implementing
6 volunteer movements driven by
7 community and civic engagement.

8 Grassroots community
9 organizing and hard-nosed,
10 bottom-line business acumen have
11 joined forces to lead me into both
12 for-profit and nonprofit management,
13 organization, and finance. It is
14 this blend of experiences that has
15 helped me recognize the significant
16 role that relationship and
17 communication play in every aspect of
18 community -- from home life to
19 education to jobs, even to
20 government.

21 It is also through my
22 ongoing work in both sectors that I
23 have come to appreciate not only
24 revitalization efforts but also
25 sustainability within our City.

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2 Within this last year, I
3 have been exposed to the great works
4 of our Parks and Recreation
5 Department. And I'm not afraid to
6 admit that a lot of this was spawned
7 by the Parks and Recreation show on
8 television. My direct involvement
9 with such parks as Hunting Park,
10 Hisey Playground, McPherson Square,
11 Fairhill Square, Harrowgate Park and
12 rec centers like Rivera, 5th and
13 Allegheny, Feltonville, McVeigh, and
14 even a few PAL centers has inspired
15 me to follow this path to today's
16 Commission hearing.

17 I want to continue my work
18 and deepen its impact by working with
19 the Department and other City
20 officials to effect change, as well
21 as to promote sustainability beyond
22 the immediate benefits of
23 revitalization. I have worked beside
24 and learned much from such Parks and
25 Recreation staffers as Barb McCabe

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 and Ed Fagan, City Council office
3 staff, and advocacy groups like
4 Friends of the Free Library of
5 Philadelphia, whose direct impact
6 includes Mayor Nutter's City-wide
7 Cleanup Kickoff press conference and
8 Comcast Cares Day at McPherson Square
9 Park and Library in Kensington.

10 I seek, in nomination to
11 this Commission, the opportunity to
12 further these and other mutually
13 beneficial relationships and lines of
14 communication and to work both to
15 revitalize and to sustain our fair
16 City. We have garnered national
17 acclaim in recent press for our
18 tourism, parks, shopping, tech jobs,
19 and more. I view a Commission
20 appointment as my opportunity to do
21 my part to maintain that momentum.
22 Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
24 you. Next we have Samuel Mason.

25 MR. MASON: That's correct,

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 Samuel Mason. Good afternoon.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
4 afternoon.

5 Mr. MASON: Thank you very
6 much for having us all today. I
7 would be very grateful for the
8 opportunity to serve on the
9 Commission and use my 34 years of
10 experience as a business lawyer to
11 give something back to the City for
12 countless hours of biking, running
13 and exploring in Fairmount Park and
14 as a tribute to some Philadelphians
15 whose last name I never knew.

16 As a ninth grader growing
17 up in Mt. Airy, I used to bike over
18 to the public tennis courts with an
19 old wooden tennis racket that I
20 didn't know how to use. There I met
21 a group of people who spent most of
22 the weekend there either playing or
23 giving witty commentary on those who
24 were playing.

25 Gene and his wife Sarah

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 presided over the group in their lawn
3 chairs. Calvin the trolley driver
4 had a great cut backhand and Fred
5 always tried to run me into a light
6 standard with his cut serve, his
7 slice serve.

8 These folks were endlessly
9 patient with me and taught me to play
10 tennis over the next three years
11 until I made our varsity team. That
12 was more than 40 years ago, and I
13 have never forgotten them.

14 Contrast this experience
15 with that of Joe Queenan, the New
16 York Times and Wall Street Journal
17 columnist. He grew up in the
18 Schuylkill Falls Housing Project and
19 wrote in his memoir that neither he
20 or his family even considered walking
21 along the river, let alone going into
22 Fairmount Park. All Philadelphians
23 should be exposed to the outdoor
24 experiences that our Parks and
25 Recreation centers provide. Aside

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 from the physical benefits of playing
3 sports, hiking, biking or running,
4 our Parks give us the chance to find
5 common ground with people from all
6 walks of life within our community.

7 In this day and age, the
8 challenge is defined resources to
9 maintain and improve our park system
10 and make intelligent decisions as to
11 its use. Efforts have been made to
12 seek support from public/private
13 partnerships, the Fairmount Park
14 Conservancy Concessions, special
15 events and other means. Finding
16 untapped resources will not be easy
17 and the new Commission will have to
18 learn from and build upon efforts
19 that have been made in the past.

20 We need to show off our
21 parks to tourists, business visitors
22 and residents of the surrounding
23 counties, perhaps in particular the
24 thousands of people who participate
25 in rowing events, charity runs,

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 charity walk and bike races.

3 We might relocate some of
4 the special events from Eakins Oval
5 and the river drives to less
6 congested areas of the park where we
7 consider ways to enable people to get
8 into our park through expanded public
9 transportation.

10 There are fountains,
11 benches and steps out in our parks
12 built in the 1930s or before which
13 are crumbled and overgrown. If we
14 invest in our Parks and Recreation
15 system, I believe that Philadelphia
16 will reap the benefits of an improved
17 quality of life and prosperity. If
18 we don't, we risk losing what past
19 generations have given to us. Thank
20 you very much.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
22 you. Do we have any questions?

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS

24 BROWN: Good afternoon, gentlemen.
25 If you had to look into a crystal

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 ball and you wanted to make one thing
3 real for our parks, what would one
4 thing be? That currently does not
5 exist.

6 MR. MARTIN: I know that
7 for the parks in the areas in which I
8 have worked most closely in Hunting
9 Park and in Kensington, some things
10 that do not exist include structured
11 programming, both after school and
12 throughout the summer. Not to say
13 that none of the parks do.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
15 BROWN: Of course.

16 MR. MARTIN: Some of the
17 parks with which I worked closely do
18 not have it. That is one thing that
19 I would like to see, structured
20 programming. Because as much as we
21 like to believe that kids hate
22 structure, they thrive on it.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
24 BROWN: Absolutely.

25 MR. MARTIN: And if we can

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 bring it to their parks, they will
3 thrive there, too.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS

5 BROWN: Thank you.

6 MR. MASON: There are many
7 ideas that one could implement. I
8 think one that I would like to see is
9 to use the park as a way of getting
10 people interested in hiking and
11 camping. That's -- I'm a member of
12 the Appalachian Mountain Club. And I
13 know that there is -- it's either
14 Knowles or Outdoor Leadership
15 Training in the park now.

16 And I would like to see a
17 partnership and involve the
18 Appalachian Mountain Club the means
19 to get down from Boston anyway to
20 this area and see if people would be
21 interested in starting to hike and
22 the outdoors. And that could lead to
23 something that's outside the purview
24 of Philadelphia. But I believe that
25 hiking and camping is a tremendous

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 education in self-reliance for
3 people. And it's a whole new world
4 that I think that a lot of people in
5 the City could discover.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
7 BROWN: We thank you both. We are
8 taking notes so know that your
9 testimony and the recommendations you
10 are offering will not be the last
11 time that you hear about them. And
12 to echo Councilwoman Sanchez's
13 appeal, please be inspired to be
14 engaged irrespective of the outcome.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. MARTIN: Any other
17 questions? Thank you very much.

18 MR. MASON: Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
20 you very much. And I would also like
21 to take a moment to acknowledge that
22 we have been joined by Councilman
23 Bobby Henon. Thank you very much.

24 And can we have the next
25 panel come forward: Mr. Fred Mauer,

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 Michael McCrea and Andrew Murray.

3 Thank you. We will begin with Mr.

4 Mauer.

5 MR. MAUER: Thank you. My

6 name is Fred Mauer. I have already

7 presented the application form, a

8 record of my accomplishments. So

9 today I want to primarily read in one

10 of the recommendations I have

11 received.

12 Before I start that, I want

13 to make a comment. Every time we

14 have these kind of situations where

15 you bring in advocates for people to

16 apply, I see a lot of strangers,

17 people I have never seen working in

18 the field before who come out with

19 good credentials but act as if they

20 are saviors of the parks.

21 Many of us have been

22 working for a long time and not been

23 able to save it. I can say at least

24 I recognize one person, Mr. McCrea

25 over here. I have seen him around

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 fighting along with me in City
3 Council to get the things that we
4 need. I'm glad to see he is on the
5 panel the same time as me.

6 I will read my
7 recommendation here. I think it's
8 simple and then comment on other
9 subjects. This is from a man named
10 Jim Tierney. Some of you may know
11 him. I will only read a part of what
12 he wrote.

13 It says: "I know of no one
14 who is more knowledgeable of the
15 Fairmount Parks system. Numerous
16 times Fred has researched in detail
17 important aspects of the park's
18 history and legal foundation. He has
19 used this knowledge to testify before
20 the Fairmount Park Commission many
21 times. He regularly testifies about
22 Fairmount Park in City Council
23 hearings. Fred is retired and is now
24 more active than ever with the
25 Fairmount Park issues. I have worked

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 with him directly for the last five
3 years about park issues.

4 Ten years ago I met him
5 when he came forward to testify on
6 park issues before City Council. His
7 testimony has always been well
8 researched, thought out and always in
9 favor of protecting and maintaining
10 the Fairmount Park system.

11 I drop down here to his
12 last comment. I greatly appreciate
13 him for the priceless value of the
14 Fairmount Park system for
15 Philadelphians. And there is no one
16 other I would rather sit on the board
17 than a Parks and Recreation Fred
18 Mauer. He suggests if you want, you
19 can contact him. I will present this
20 in the material for the record. I'll
21 just make a short close.

22 I remember sitting in City
23 Council and defending the Recreation
24 Department when their budgets were
25 cut and they were closing all the rec

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 centers in the A, B and C. And then
3 they locked the doors on the A ones
4 even. So I have been around trying
5 to protect our parks system and
6 recreation since they were created
7 back in 1947.

8 I remember we had no
9 recreation centers until then. For a
10 good period of time, we have ones.
11 The last period of time when all the
12 roofs were collapsing, there was a
13 group of local citizens, me included,
14 who advocated: Let's get our roofs
15 repaired and get our rec centers
16 working again. I thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
18 you for your time and for your
19 testimony today. Next we are going
20 to have Mr. McCrea.

21 MR. MCCREA: Thank you for
22 the opportunity to testify. My name
23 is Mike McCrea. I am a president of
24 my local advisory council at the
25 Feltonville Youth Access enter, the

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 Philadelphia Recreation Advisory
3 Council, a Civil Engineer, and
4 part-time pig farmer, applying for a
5 position on the Commission on Parks
6 and Recreation. In these elected,
7 volunteer positions, I serve a number
8 of very diverse and very different
9 constituencies.

10 At the Feltonville Youth
11 Access Center, we partner with the
12 Recreation Department to deliver
13 vitally needed services to youth and
14 young adults of our community. It
15 involves fund raising, accessing
16 grants and other resources from both
17 our local and our state
18 representative, as well as private
19 donors. We just recently completed a
20 very large and involved Public/
21 Private Partnership, taking a
22 generous pledge of over \$200,000 from
23 Shire Pharmaceuticals and with the
24 help of Councilwoman Sanchez added
25 over \$300,000 in capital dollars and

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 Streetscape funds and used that pool
3 of revenue to hire our own
4 contractors and complete a total
5 renovation of our outdoor facilities
6 in only three months, start to
7 finish. Our partnership with so many
8 individual entities is what really
9 made this happen.

10 The Philadelphia Recreation
11 Advisory Council represents the local
12 volunteer Advisory Councils citywide,
13 each one representing their own local
14 recreation center, park or
15 playground. Every community, just
16 like every neighborhood, has its own
17 identity and individual needs. And I
18 think serving this eclectic body of
19 passionately dedicated volunteers for
20 more than twelve years gives me a
21 unique perspective in serving a
22 citywide constituency and believe it
23 would make me a valuable asset to
24 this Commission.

25 Just as an example, during

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 the tough times the City budget was
3 facing, our membership raised over
4 \$150,000 in only three months to add
5 to the Splash Fund, making sure every
6 swimming pool opened that summer.

7 I feel credibility and
8 independence are two of the most
9 important qualities needed to serve
10 on this Commission. Both are
11 qualities I have exhibited for most
12 of my adult life. As vice president
13 and president of both my local
14 Advisory Council and the citywide
15 Philadelphia Recreation Advisory
16 Council, the folks we represent
17 continue to rely on us and that we
18 will stand up for and support what is
19 in their best interests. Otherwise
20 we would not have continued these
21 positions for so long.

22 The fact that we served for
23 this length of time should speak for
24 itself. It is about standing up for
25 what's right, regardless of

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 popularity or personal gain.

3 I also believe I possess an
4 extensive knowledge of Philadelphia's
5 Parks and Recreation systems, both
6 from a volunteer perspective and also
7 from a management perspective, having
8 worked with several different
9 administrations on many issues. In
10 addition, I understand the effort it
11 takes to provide these vital services
12 both from an administrative and a
13 volunteer perspective, balancing the
14 expectations along with the ability
15 to provide basic services and also
16 bridging the gap between them. Also,
17 being a member of the Revenue
18 Enhancement Committee for the current
19 Parks and Recreation Commission has
20 given me additional insight into the
21 Commission's priorities and direction
22 over its initial two years.

23 The Land Management and
24 Environmental experiences I bring
25 from my job as a civil engineer are

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2 also key points in considering my
3 qualifications. I believe these and
4 the previously stated characteristics
5 ultimately qualify me to sit as a new
6 member of the Commission on Parks and
7 Recreation.

8 To be successful, the
9 Commission on Parks and Recreation
10 has to be able to stand on its own
11 and achieve an individual identity,
12 taking on the difficult issues that
13 have continually retarded the growth
14 of both the Parks system and the
15 Recreation Department. My
16 application was submitted from my
17 deep belief that I can help make a
18 difference and assist the new
19 Commission in accomplishing its goals
20 of creating a Parks and Recreation
21 system that benefits everyone and
22 that we can all be proud of. Thank
23 you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
25 you very much for your testimony.

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2 And now we will have Mr. Murray.

3 MR. MURRAY: I'm Andrew
4 Murray. Most people know me as Drew.
5 I am here today to introduce myself
6 and give all of you an idea of my
7 qualifications to serve on the
8 Philadelphia Commission on Parks and
9 Recreation. I hope you won't hold
10 this against me. I grew up in the
11 suburbs of Philadelphia. However, I
12 spent much of my childhood in the
13 City, whether driving in with my
14 father, who was and is the athletic
15 director at St. Joseph's Prep, to
16 watch crew races on the Schuylkill
17 and watch soccer games or when I
18 myself attended high school there.

19 I fell in love with
20 Philadelphia. I received my MBA from
21 Temple University and eight years
22 ago, despite the fact that I work in
23 Conshohocken, chose to pay the wage
24 tax and move to Philadelphia. That
25 is how much I love the City of

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 Philadelphia. Why else would anyone
3 in their right mind choose to pay
4 over 4 percent more in taxes.

5 I have been an active
6 member of my community for the entire
7 time that I have resided in Logan
8 Square. During the past year, I have
9 served on the Logan Square
10 Neighborhood Association's board, as
11 well as served as the Co-President of
12 the Friends of Coxe Park. I am
13 currently the co-chair of both the
14 LSNA Parks Committee and the
15 Education Committee, a Committee
16 which I envisioned and helped to
17 create.

18 In October of 2007 my life
19 changed drastically. My wife and I
20 had a daughter. I have always
21 enjoyed the incredible amenities that
22 Parks and Recreation provides. Now
23 that I am a father, I further realize
24 the great importance that parks and
25 green space provide to our City. I

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2 stated previously I am the
3 Co-President of the Friends of Coxe
4 Park, a small park in the Logan
5 Square neighborhood in need of
6 improvement. The FOCPP was
7 incorporated in July of 2011 with the
8 purpose of revitalizing the park.
9 Since its founding, the FOCPP has
10 organized cleanups, advocated for
11 improved safety and is currently in
12 the middle of a grassroots
13 fundraising campaign to improve the
14 park; a campaign that has raised over
15 \$10,000 in just a few short months.

16 My experience with the
17 Logan Square Neighborhood Association
18 and the Friends of Coxe Park has
19 shown me what an incredible impact
20 that these groups can have on parks.
21 Parks and Recreation has done an
22 excellent job maintaining and
23 beautifying the parks in the City of
24 Philadelphia. They have done this on
25 an underfunded budget.

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2 The relationships Parks and
3 Recreation have with civic
4 associations and Friends Groups have
5 helped decrease the costs of cleaning
6 and maintaining these parks. I
7 believe the Commission could help
8 continue to foster and create new
9 relationships and encourage the
10 community to take an active role in
11 the cleaning and maintaining of their
12 local parks. Continued and improved
13 success would have a huge economic
14 impact for Parks and Recreations.

15 I live in the Logan Square
16 community and I benefit from the
17 numerous parks and other green spaces
18 within a few minutes from my house.
19 Not all Philadelphians enjoy this
20 benefit. Councilwoman Cindy Bass
21 stated at the Philadelphia Parks
22 Alliance news conference on Wednesday
23 last week, "Parks are not an option."
24 Councilman Jim Kenney at the same
25 news conference stated that, "Parks

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 are a great economic equalizer."

3 I could not agree more with

4 Councilwoman Bass and Councilman

5 Kenney. Green space should not be a

6 luxury. All Philadelphians should

7 realize the benefit of parks and

8 green spaces. As detailed in Green

9 2015, citizens should be able to walk

10 to parks and recreation resources

11 within ten minutes of their homes.

12 Green spaces and parks revitalize

13 neighborhoods. Philadelphians at all

14 economic levels should enjoy the

15 benefits of parks, sustainability and

16 green space. Too many of our

17 neighbors are denied this advantage.

18 All of us need to realize that parks

19 are not an option, they are a

20 necessity. As a member of this

21 Commission, I would advocate strongly

22 for this idea. Thank you for your

23 time and consideration.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank

25 you for your testimony. Do we have

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 any questions from Council? Okay.

3 Councilman Johnson.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

5 I just wanted to do additional

6 follow-up and thank all of you for

7 your testimony. I just want to

8 elaborate. From your perspective,

9 what do you think would be

10 recommendations to make sure as we

11 move forward our top three priorities

12 that we as Council and the City of

13 Philadelphia need to take a look at

14 in terms of moving our Parks and

15 Recreation to the next level?

16 MR. MAUER: I will give you

17 one: money, money, money. When we

18 started this process with this

19 Commission thing, our best, greatest

20 need was to improve the ranger

21 situation. When we lost the

22 Fairmount Park Garden system, we lost

23 all controls in the public parks.

24 Bringing that back should have been a

25 priority.

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2 Unfortunately, the City
3 never wanted to step up and pay for
4 security guards. When the William
5 Penn Foundation gave us \$25 million
6 to set up the ranger force and trust
7 fund, that should have been the
8 impetus. The City refused to fund
9 it. We are existing on begging and
10 borrowing to keep the ranger force at
11 a minimum staff.

12 I think there's 16 people.
13 And they are the greatest asset we
14 have to replace the secure system of
15 the park where we have contact with
16 the personalities of the people and
17 the education they need with an
18 educated ranger. They are a great
19 asset. We need them and we need the
20 force that they were committed to be.
21 42 people were the original force.
22 They were all well educated at the
23 federal and state level and in Temple
24 University. We had a well-educated
25 force.

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2 I can say now the street
3 director who was actually a Fairmount
4 Park ranger, thank God we had a guy
5 in at the lower level and rose to the
6 top of City government. I appreciate
7 that ranger, and I hope that he will
8 acknowledge: If you don't give us a
9 secure system of protection in the
10 Park and there is a small group of
11 rangers, that's the only way we can
12 progress forward. Thank you.

13 MR. McCREA: I listened to
14 most of the hearing yesterday off and
15 on and I heard most of it yesterday,
16 and I think everybody asked about and
17 talked about getting required money
18 and funding. I mean, that's the
19 biggest thing. I mean dedicated
20 funding.

21 We can go out and raise all
22 the money we want, fund raising, all
23 those other things, advertising. But
24 none of that is all dedicated
25 funding. It's all one time, one fund

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2 for one issue. That's what it is and
3 that's it.

4 And we get nine-tenths of 1
5 percent, nine-tenths of 1 percent of
6 the City budget goes to Parks and
7 Recreation. Let me say that again.
8 Nine-tenths of 1 percent, not even 1
9 percent. Nine-tenths of 1 percent.

10 Ultimately in the last four
11 years, the budget has been cut over
12 30 percent, the operating budget
13 which is the dedicated funding that
14 we're talking about, all over 30
15 percent in four years.

16 So that to me is the
17 biggest issue at this point because
18 we have dedicated volunteers and we
19 have staff and if we had the
20 resources to do these things, they
21 would be getting done. Plain. And I
22 can't say it any more plainer than
23 that.

24 MR. MURRAY: I just want to
25 echo what the two gentlemen here

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2 said. Number one, restore 8 million.

3 It's somewhat simple. I know

4 everyone here has heard that. Parks

5 and Recreation has done an incredible

6 job. I mean, to be listed as one of

7 the top ten park cities in the world

8 with their budget is an incredible

9 feat. They need more money. You

10 can't sustain that.

11 So I would say number one

12 is money. Number two -- I'm very

13 lucky. I live in Logan Square. I

14 live right off the parkway. I have

15 so much green space near me. I can

16 walk to so many parks. Everyone in

17 the City, every child, every adult

18 should be able to walk to a park.

19 And I think obviously that goes back

20 to the money. Parks and Recs needs

21 more money in order to accomplish

22 that.

23 I think it is so important.

24 There are so many studies that show

25 if you have green space in your

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2 community, crime goes down. The
3 entire community just benefits from
4 that green space, whether it's just
5 green space or it's park space.
6 Everyone will benefit from that and
7 that's so important.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

9 Hindsight is always 20/20. I'm not
10 sure because I haven't been here.
11 It's probably the current chairperson
12 commissioner that is here. Is there
13 another recommendation from the Parks
14 and Recreation Commission to restore
15 that dedicated funding from the
16 parking tax it was? Just curious.
17 Thank you. All of you did a great
18 job.

19 MR. McCREA: Just to
20 clarify the point, there are plenty
21 of programs that are run on their own
22 with no funding from the City, that
23 don't require funding that run on
24 their own. So it's not like we are
25 asking to fund everything.

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2 We run a farm in the
3 northwest section of the City. We do
4 pigs, sheep and cattle. We have kids
5 from ages 8 to 19, take them to
6 different shows across the state. We
7 also go to Harrisburg in January. I
8 would be the pig farmer. So I have
9 been there doing that since 1999 to
10 the present. And it winds up being
11 my part-time pig farmer title.

12 But we have also organized
13 trips, national trips, and we fund
14 that all ourselves based 100 percent.
15 We don't get any -- I'm sorry. We do
16 get a small grant from Curtis
17 Jones -- in the last couple of years
18 we have gotten a little bit from that
19 because I am the official pig farmer
20 of the Fourth District.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. McCREA: Other than
23 that, we run well over \$20,000 a
24 year. We run that program ourselves.
25 So we are not asking to run

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2 everything. But ultimately the basic
3 stuff we are asking for we need the
4 resources to run it.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
6 Councilwoman Sanchez? No. Thank you
7 very much for your testimony. Thank
8 you.

9 And next up we have Matthew
10 Perks, Carol B. Rice and Quincy
11 Richardson. And following them C.R.
12 Robertson, Robert Santoro, Sr. and
13 Aaron Siegel. Quincy Richardson is
14 not here, and Mr. Santoro. Okay.
15 And CR is not here and Aaron Siegel
16 is not here.

17 MR. SIEGEL: I am here.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
19 Mr. Siegel -- okay. And also, why
20 don't we have you come up, sir, have
21 you join the panel, yes, so you can
22 give your testimony now.

23 And also, why don't we have
24 up on deck, Mr. Sklaroff and Sarah
25 Clark Stuart, Michael Sklaroff, okay.

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2 So why don't we go ahead and begin
3 with Mr. Perks.

4 MR. PERKS: Thank you. My
5 name is Matthew Perks. Good
6 afternoon, Madam Chair and members of
7 the Committee. I would like to thank
8 you all for taking the time to listen
9 to the many candidates who have
10 applied for consideration as members
11 of the Commission on Parks and
12 Recreation.

13 I have lived in
14 Philadelphia for nearly thirty years
15 and over those years, I have probably
16 spent thousands of hours biking,
17 skating, touring park houses or just
18 sitting by the river under the trees.
19 I am grateful to be considered for an
20 opportunity to give something back in
21 return for all the pleasure that the
22 parks have given to me and members of
23 my family.

24 Virtually all of my
25 professional life has been devoted to

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2 public service. I was appointed by
3 then District Attorney Edward G.
4 Rendell and I have worked there under
5 four District Attorneys. Currently,
6 after having worked in many different
7 units, including the Juvenile Court
8 Unit, I am assigned as Chief of
9 Private Criminal Complaints. In
10 addition to seeing from the inside
11 how a City agency works, a prosecutor
12 learns very quickly what it's like to
13 talk to victims of crime, people of
14 all backgrounds and from all the
15 neighborhoods of this City.

16 Those people have been put
17 in a situation not of their choosing
18 when they deal with our office: We
19 listen very carefully to what they
20 have to tell us and we explain what
21 they can expect from government,
22 specifically the criminal justice
23 system, which does not operate as
24 smoothly or as reliably as maybe it
25 should in a perfect world. The

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2 process is very similar to the
3 communication with the public that
4 would be expected from a member of
5 the Commission on Parks and
6 Recreation.

7 I also attended many public
8 meetings as the president of my
9 condominium association on
10 Rittenhouse Square, as a member of
11 the board of the Friends of
12 Rittenhouse Square and as a member of
13 the Board of Governors of the
14 Philadelphia Bar Association.

15 Parks, pools and recreation
16 centers and organized activities for
17 young people are absolutely essential
18 to the prevention of crime and
19 juvenile delinquency. Arresting,
20 prosecuting and incarcerating
21 criminals are necessary tasks of
22 local governments, but they are the
23 least effective and most expensive
24 way to deal with the crime problem.
25 Moreover, they're reactive; once

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2 someone is victimized, all the
3 criminal justice in the world will
4 not give them back their health,
5 their property or their freedom from
6 living in fear.

7 A much better way is to
8 give young people convenient places
9 to go and spend their time in
10 positive ways, learning positive
11 values from positive role models.
12 But we can't just stop there. We
13 have to make sure that we provide a
14 safe and attractive environment.
15 What we don't want is for a
16 playground or a rec center to be
17 another place where crime can occur.

18 Philadelphia is extremely
19 fortunate to come into the 21st
20 century with a world class system of
21 Parks and Recreation facilities. We
22 may not always have pay phones,
23 corner video stores or even
24 bookstores, but we will always have
25 parks and we will always need them

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2 for the role they play in the future
3 of a healthy city. The two most
4 important considerations for the
5 future of the city are solid economic
6 development to keep people employed
7 and create new jobs and effective
8 public safety policies to protect
9 those people from crime.

10 We cannot expect people to
11 stay here, much less move here unless
12 we can provide them with generous
13 amounts of clean, safe, well-funded,
14 well-maintained and green public
15 space. When we do, the resources
16 that we work hard to find and expend
17 on those public spaces will come back
18 to us many times over in increased
19 tax revenue. Thank you for the
20 opportunity to testify today and for
21 considering my application.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Right
23 on time. Thank you. Next we have
24 Ms. Rice.

25 MS. RICE: Yes. Good

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2 afternoon.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
4 afternoon.

5 MS. RICE: My name is Carol
6 Rice. And I'm here today to speak,
7 to seek reappointment to the
8 Commission on Parks and Recreation.
9 I have been committed to promoting a
10 healthy and green Philadelphia
11 through our Parks and Recreation
12 facilities. As a former employee of
13 the Department of Recreation which
14 was for 35 years, I have continued my
15 dedication through the Commission and
16 the volunteer efforts with the new
17 Parks and Recreation Department.

18 I am the Chairman of the
19 Branding and Communications Committee
20 for the Commission. Our goal is and
21 continues to be the introduction of
22 the newly formed Commission and to
23 make sure that the people of the City
24 recognize that the Department of
25 Parks and Recreation is a leader in

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2 the field. To this effort, we have
3 developed a Facebook page which
4 serves to highlight the work of the
5 Commission with emphasis on revenue
6 enhancement. We encourage input on
7 standards that are related to park
8 land and its use. We promote
9 programs and activities that are
10 taking place in our facilities.

11 The Commission now has a
12 logo which helps to increase our
13 recognition and is used to focus on
14 the volunteer recognition program,
15 the PaRC Star that allows people to
16 salute the volunteers that contribute
17 so much to the success of the
18 Department.

19 We are meeting six times a
20 year throughout the Parks and
21 Recreation facilities. This allows
22 communities to have face-to-face
23 meeting with the members, share
24 concerns as well as successes and
25 open the avenues of communication to

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2 the Commission. We are able to bring
3 current topics for the people to hear
4 and comment.

5 I personally have taken on
6 the mantle of pushing for the
7 involvement of groups to participate
8 in the sustainability program. I
9 have been successful in getting
10 groups to plant trees and plant
11 vegetables and support the urban
12 gardening programs throughout this
13 system. My push, of course, is
14 always that we use a Parks and
15 Recreation facility.

16 The Commission is firmly
17 dedicated to working with Council
18 Mayor Nutter and the Department of
19 Parks and Recreation to increase
20 public/private sector resources. I
21 would like to continue to work and
22 advocate as we move to make our Parks
23 and Recreation system one that is
24 envied throughout the country. Thank
25 you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
3 you very much for your testimony.
4 And Mr. Santoro.

5 MR. SANTORO: I'm Bob
6 Santoro. I have lived my entire life
7 in Philadelphia. I am semi-retired
8 and have enjoyed a park my entire
9 life and have constantly brought
10 visitors from out of town through the
11 park to show off this emerald that
12 the City has. Having worked with
13 park groups and the Fairmount Park
14 Board in years past, I now have time
15 to renew my efforts.

16 My application shows my
17 past involvement with the Park and
18 the many things I can offer. One of
19 my goals is for the protection of our
20 park lands from invasive plant life,
21 overuse and potential damaging
22 development. In the early nineties I
23 had attended a national convention of
24 volunteer groups in Minneapolis-St.
25 Paul. And their big thing there,

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2 they were pushing greenways. And
3 they were pushing reforestation and
4 planting of trees. And I realized
5 Philly was so far ahead of the curve.
6 We had greenways. We had greenways
7 put into our city as we were building
8 the city. And our volunteer groups
9 were already doing conservation work
10 and reforestation.

11 These volunteer groups are
12 such a major asset, not just for the
13 work they do on the grounds with the
14 actual physical work but they are an
15 excellent lobbying body for getting
16 more funds for Parks and Recreation.
17 Volunteers vote. These are the kind
18 of people that you can get, if you
19 organize them to get behind you and
20 support the Parks system without
21 touching your already limited funding
22 sources.

23 The Parks should already be
24 promoted as a secondary tourist
25 attraction for tourists coming into

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2 the City. We have the bicycle races.
3 We have the walks. We have the runs,
4 all of that. But the smaller groups,
5 the individual tourists should be
6 made aware that we have hiking trails
7 and other things. That will keep
8 them in the city a couple of days
9 more.

10 You might be in Wissahickon
11 and in a, you know, you are in
12 Colorado, basically. I have a
13 reputation with organizations that I
14 belong to for being able to make
15 things happen. Couple of examples.

16 Many years ago when I was
17 with the Friends of the Wissahickon,
18 there was a major water main break,
19 dumping already processed water into
20 the Wissey. The ground was rumbling.
21 No one could get anything done.

22 So I wound up calling the
23 Inquirer. Previously we tried for
24 two weeks to get it remedied. We had
25 it fixed in two days.

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2 Another instance, the
3 Buffalo Soldiers needed a home.
4 Working with the Park Commission as
5 an outsider, I was able to get them
6 on the West River Drive.

7 A similar instance, they
8 were moving the statue from the East
9 River Drive to Logan Circle. And
10 Governor Ridge was coming in for the
11 dedication. They needed a flagpole.

12 I scrambled and I was able
13 to get a 35-foot pole temporarily put
14 in place 20 minutes before they
15 showed up without costing the City a
16 penny.

17 I'm a hands-on person. I
18 get things done. These are just a
19 couple of examples of things that I
20 have done with the organizations in
21 the City. I'm a native,
22 dyed-in-the-wool Philadelphian and
23 this is my city. And I want to help.
24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank

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2 you so much. Thank you so much for
3 your testimony. Anybody have any
4 questions from Council?

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: As you
6 have already served in the trenches:
7 From your perspective as we move
8 forward, again, with our Parks and
9 Recs and your experience being on the
10 Commission, just highlight key
11 priorities that we should take as a
12 challenge as we move forward looking
13 at improving the Parks and Recreation
14 separate from the funding.

15 And also give me an idea of
16 improvements in the direction we have
17 taken on the recreation side. I love
18 our parks. I love the Schuylkill
19 River Trail. Me and my wife drove --
20 we even biked from Valley Forge all
21 the way to the Parkers Dam. But we
22 had our cars left back at Valley
23 Forge.

24 (Laughter.)

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's

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2 a true story. But, you know, so I do
3 know the parks and I hang out in the
4 parks, enjoy myself. But I am also
5 looking at another -- couple of
6 people come up and talk about
7 playgrounds, slat boards, you know,
8 equipment for the children, how to
9 dig -- most day care centers go to
10 the playgrounds during the daytime.
11 That's like their little hangout.

12 So I am trying to shift
13 some of this dialogue, maybe start
14 highlighting the importance. I think
15 it was brought to my attention. They
16 said, Well, Councilman, playgrounds
17 are inside parks. But that's not
18 always the case. I can name a couple
19 of playgrounds in the Second
20 Councilmanic District that's not even
21 affiliated to any park. So I just
22 want to make sure we put a little
23 attention on our recreation centers
24 as well.

25 So from your perspective

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2 because I'm quite sure you have done
3 a great job as Commissioner as well.

4 MS. RICE: Well, my
5 background is recreation. I was the
6 Deputy Commissioner for the
7 Department from 1992 to 1998. And it
8 was the program side, which is
9 recreation facilities. And I think I
10 served on the Commission as the --
11 and they will tell you. They always
12 talk about parks -- and I say and
13 recreation to make sure that we
14 highlight this. Those facilities are
15 very important to neighborhoods.

16 As Mike McCrea indicated
17 about the Youth Access Center, we
18 started that program because we felt
19 that we needed to put into our larger
20 recreation centers a multitude of
21 services because the kids come there.
22 Families come there. And when you
23 use your center in that manner, then
24 you reach more. They come because
25 they are coming for fun, but then you

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2 can reach the other things that are
3 taking place in their life.

4 As far as a concentration,
5 we testified, the Commission itself
6 testified, that the Department does
7 need money. Because we have to
8 concentrate on how our facilities are
9 able to give to the community. A
10 well-maintained facility, well-lit is
11 safe. One that is not safe is one
12 where there is no lighting. So you
13 have to concentrate on that. It
14 takes money.

15 So all of these things that
16 you would like to see in your
17 facilities, they do take money. And
18 it's important that we are funded. I
19 heard the Mike McCrea thing about 1
20 percent, nine-tenths of 1 percent.
21 Just imagine what we could do with
22 just a little bit more because we are
23 good.

24 I mean, I talk as of now
25 because even though I have been gone

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2 eleven years -- I retired eleven
3 years ago -- it's still my Department
4 and my city, it's still my programs
5 that I am -- that I push for. So
6 that's why I am involved in the
7 Commission. I want to make sure that
8 the facilities are recognized as an
9 important part.

10 However, I think that we
11 can use the facilities and match them
12 up with the parks because there are a
13 lot of pocket parks, you know, around
14 the City. You've got Carroll Park.
15 I grew up in West Philly. It's a
16 nice park, and Haddington -- well,
17 it's not Haddington. It's Shepard.
18 Shepard Playground, let's begin to
19 match up programs that can go. And
20 therefore our kids get the kind of
21 exposure to parks. And maybe one day
22 they will do the trail with the bikes
23 from Valley Forge down to the Museum.
24 Except they can't leave their car
25 back.

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2 (Laughter.)

3 MS. RICE: But, yes. I
4 have -- I have served as the advocate
5 for the recreation segment of the
6 Commission. I hope I have answered
7 your question.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: It's
9 crystal clear.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
11 you so much. Next we will have
12 Mr. Aaron Siegel, Mark Sklaroff and
13 Sarah Clark Stuart.

14 MR. SIEGEL: Good morning.
15 My name is Aaron Siegel, and I have
16 been involved in the entertainment
17 and social life of Philadelphia for
18 most of my adult life as CEO of the
19 Spectrum Marina in Philadelphia and
20 the management company, Spectacor
21 Management Group and then finally
22 moving to London to operate Spectacor
23 Management Group International. I am
24 also chairman emeritus of the Arts
25 and Business Council of the Chamber

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2 of Commerce and I am a board member
3 of the Philadelphia Hospitality and
4 other organizations like PAL.

5 One of the things that I
6 would like to underscore is the fact
7 that I operated the Dad Vail Regatta
8 for some five years and was one of
9 the first people to bring sponsorship
10 to the regatta. We also developed a
11 program during the summer for inner
12 city kids to learn how to row, scull
13 row, on the Schuylkill River.

14 I worked with the Park
15 Commission during that time in a
16 variety of programs, both developing
17 them and administering them.

18 Everyone recognizes that
19 the financial issues relating to City
20 funding and state funding are of
21 significant and paramount importance
22 for the park to succeed.

23 While these funding sources
24 are recognized as important, I think
25 it's important for the park to

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2 develop its own funding sources,
3 particularly in the forms of
4 sponsorships; that is, where
5 organizations will take a leadership
6 role in sponsoring various activities
7 or sites at the park, lend their name
8 to that site and, of course, the
9 associated funds that would not only
10 maintain whatever it is they are
11 sponsoring but would add additional
12 funds to the operating capital of the
13 park.

14 The problems facing the
15 park are significant because of its
16 size and its outreach and its
17 utilization. And all of these issues
18 really go back to the basic funding.
19 And I believe that it is possible to
20 fund -- to find sponsors for various
21 organizations. As an example, the
22 Azalea Garden. I think you could
23 approach the Florists Association in
24 Philadelphia to provide a sponsorship
25 for the Azalea Garden.

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2 And they would have the
3 naming rights for that Azalea Garden
4 and they would provide funds to
5 accomplish that. So there's a lot of
6 interesting perspectives relative to
7 the park, interesting in terms of
8 ways to go forward not only with
9 funding but with programs. Programs
10 are the lifeblood but they all
11 require money.

12 And the best way to fund
13 these programs is to have someone
14 sponsor them. And the sponsor would
15 then have an intrinsic interest in
16 the success of these programs.
17 That's what we found with the Dad
18 Vail Regatta. That's what we found
19 with one of the largest events in
20 Philadelphia which was the Dinofest
21 where we attracted 400,000 people to
22 the old Civic Center, and then we
23 took the event to Chicago and
24 attracted significant numbers of
25 people there at Navy Pier.

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2 So I understand the
3 entertainment business. I understand
4 the sponsorship business and I
5 understand the Park. I'm home grown.
6 I grew up in Philadelphia. I went to
7 school in Philadelphia and as
8 disparate as my education might be,
9 I'm a graduate of the Philadelphia
10 College of Pharmacy.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

12 MR. SIEGEL: I haven't
13 practiced pharmacy in a number of
14 years, but I have enjoyed all my
15 relationships nevertheless.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
17 you. We are going to ask you to hold
18 the rest of your testimony just
19 because we are out of time. But
20 unless there was something else you
21 wanted to say to summarize.

22 MR. SIEGEL: No. Thank
23 you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well,
25 thank you very much. And next we

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2 have Mr. Sklaroff.

3 MR. SKLAROFF: Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
5 you.

6 MR. SKLAROFF: Michael
7 Sklaroff for the record. Thank you
8 for the opportunity to appear today.
9 I would say that I think that Mr.
10 Siegel's ideas are totally excellent.
11 And I hope they can be pursued
12 because they are good ideas and they
13 are proven ideas. So I think those
14 suggestions are terrific.

15 What do I hope to bring to
16 the Commission? Some fresh ideas and
17 new energies. I offer three things:
18 a passion for the Park, experience in
19 preserving, protecting and promoting
20 historical and civic treasures and
21 organizational skills, the ability to
22 get things done.

23 To begin with, the Park is
24 in my blood. I can't say I was
25 actually was born in the Park,

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2 although it seemed that way.

3 (Laughter.)

4 MR. SKLAROFF: Because when

5 I was born -- and I don't remember

6 exactly the details of this -- my

7 family lived on the second floor of

8 an apartment -- on the second floor

9 of a house on Parkside Avenue across

10 from Memorial Hall. So it is in my

11 blood.

12 I lived in Parkside. I

13 lived in West Park and have been a

14 resident of Spring Garden for almost

15 40 years now.

16 As a lawyer, I have

17 represented institutions in the City

18 in enhancing and protecting their

19 historic buildings, including the

20 Franklin Institute, the Free Library,

21 the Art Museum, the Academy of Music

22 and the College of Physicians of

23 Philadelphia.

24 I have advocated for and

25 protected historic resources in the

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2 City, including historic Bartram
3 Gardens in southwest Philadelphia
4 when it was threatened by a proposed
5 transfer station promoted by a man
6 from New Jersey whose claim to fame
7 was that he was barred from trash
8 transfer in the State of New Jersey.
9 So you can imagine what we are
10 dealing with.

11 And I also was active --
12 and these are pro bono -- for the
13 neighbors of Greenwood Cemetery, a
14 star Civil War cemetery in lower
15 Frankford, when it was proposed as a
16 site for a crematorium and funeral
17 parlor.

18 In 1992 I represented
19 Franklin Town Corporation in the
20 establishment of Franklin Park, now
21 called the Matthias Baldwin Park
22 after the founder of Baldwin
23 Locomotives, near 18th and Hamilton,
24 working with the District Councilman
25 and the Fairmount Park Commission.

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2 In 1998 when all seemed
3 last, I started the movement to save
4 the Dream Garden, the Maxfield
5 Parrish/Louis Comfort Tiffany glass
6 mural at the Curtis Building, which
7 Steve Wynn wanted to move to Las
8 Vegas.

9 On October 6, 2002, I
10 organized -- and my law firm and I
11 sponsored -- a fundraiser for the
12 Philadelphia Orchestra and the Water
13 Works Restoration Fund to celebrate
14 music and raise money for one of the
15 Park's great treasures, the Water
16 Works. In this effort I worked with
17 Joe Kluger, then President of the
18 Philadelphia Orchestra, and the late
19 Ernesta Drinker Ballard, who was the
20 guiding force for the WaterWorks
21 restoration. The orchestra played
22 Handel's Water Music to an audience
23 of about 400 people.

24 I served on the
25 Philadelphia Historical Commission

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2 for twelve years, five as Chair.

3 While Chair, I initiated and

4 conducted a continuing education

5 course for Commission members,

6 lawyers, planners and architects

7 entitled the "Law of Historical

8 Preservation." In 2005, we showcased

9 the success of Michael Coard and

10 others in getting the National Park

11 Service to acknowledge and

12 commemorate the slave quarters - and

13 the people who lived there - at the

14 site of George Washington's little

15 White House at 6th & Market Streets,

16 just yards from the current site of

17 the Liberty Bell. This was a story

18 that needed telling and retelling.

19 For the past several years,

20 I have worked with St. Joseph's

21 University and its athletic

22 department in obtaining approval for

23 its intercollegiate and intramural

24 sport programs -- and its summer

25 camps -- for its new 38-acre Maguire

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2 Campus at City Avenue in Merion.

3 Beginning in 1998, I
4 represented Fairmount Management, the
5 master concessionaire for portions of
6 Fairmount Park. This engagement was
7 not a success. But the lessons we
8 learned there taught me about the
9 challenges and opportunities in
10 bringing the private and public
11 sector together. It wasn't easy
12 then. It will not be easy now.

13 I would love to share my
14 experiences, my energy and my passion
15 for the Park as a member of the
16 Commission. Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
18 you very much. Okay. And next we
19 have Ms. Sarah Clark Stuart.

20 MS. STUART: Thank you,
21 Madam Chair and other members of the
22 Committee. Good afternoon. Thank
23 you for allowing me to testify here
24 today. My name is Sarah Clark
25 Stuart. I am the policy director at

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2 the Bicycle Coalition of Greater
3 Philadelphia. I have spent the last
4 number of years since 2004 working on
5 trails and park access issues in my
6 career and also as a neighbor and in
7 the Logan Square neighborhood.

8 It has been a privilege for
9 me to serve on the Parks and
10 Recreation Commission since my
11 appointment in 2009. And it would be
12 an honor for me to be reappointed for
13 another term.

14 When I came here three
15 years ago to testify, the Department
16 was just being merged, and the
17 Commission was just getting its legs
18 as a brand-new advisory body. Since
19 that time, the leadership and the
20 guidance of Mike DiBerardinis and the
21 Commission Chair Nancy Goldenberg
22 have forged a very strong
23 relationship, and we have worked well
24 together.

25 And as I think you know,

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2 our two main accomplishments have
3 been to draft and get introduced
4 legislation to provide a process for
5 land protection and a disposition.
6 The Enhancement Committee, Revenue
7 Enhancement Committee which I sit on,
8 helped pay for and prepare the report
9 reviewing the Department's concession
10 program and made recommendations on
11 how to improve that process to
12 facilitate more revenue for the
13 Department.

14 And I won't repeat what a
15 lot of people have already said which
16 is that the Department does need more
17 funding. The Department does very,
18 very well and it does a lot with very
19 little at its disposal. And it has
20 such a herculean task of taking care
21 of 9,000 acres, hundreds of
22 recreational facilities, many miles
23 of trails, thousands of street trees.

24 It administers over 140 day
25 camps, 70 pools. It's gargantuan

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2 what it has to do with very little
3 staff and very little budget.

4 Some of the things that I
5 have learned and taken away from my
6 time on the Commission, is that as
7 hard as they all work and the staff
8 works and make as much as they can
9 for every dollar that they have,
10 there is still many Parks and
11 Recreation centers in poor condition
12 and they suffer from crime, vandalism
13 overuse.

14 We have been going around
15 this past year and holding our
16 bimonthly meetings at different
17 recreation centers throughout the
18 City. And it's one of the very basic
19 things like lights, security cameras,
20 trash cans that people want.

21 And the community has come
22 to our meetings and said these
23 things. They are so basic, but they
24 are so necessary.

25 And the other thing that

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2 struck me is that some part of the
3 park system and rec system are
4 besieged by problems that just don't
5 exist in other parks. And in
6 particular, I'd have to say that's
7 the ATV problem, which I would love
8 to spend the next year or so trying
9 to figure out with Council how to
10 cure the scourge that is making parks
11 unfit and unlivable and unusable for
12 many neighborhoods.

13 So that's -- my time is up
14 so I will stop there. But the very
15 last thing that I just want to
16 reemphasize that you also know is
17 that if it weren't for the volunteers
18 who work so hard to make our parks
19 successful, our system would be in
20 much worse shape. It's really time
21 for the City to step up and play a
22 larger role than it has in the past
23 few decades. Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
25 you very much. Any questions?

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2 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS

4 BROWN: Good afternoon, everyone. I
5 would be remiss not to acknowledge
6 both the good work of Carol Rice and
7 yourself for the work you have done
8 thus far and for being a voice for
9 not only those in the trenches
10 because we really do need folk who
11 are advocating. And when I say
12 trenches, I mean in the neighborhood,
13 in the playgrounds, for young people
14 and children who can't get to the
15 park. So know that your voice is
16 appreciated.

17 You should know that my
18 office is already beginning to look
19 at this ATV issue. We have been
20 doing the research, trying to get a
21 number of incidents from the police.
22 Because it is out of control. It is
23 out of control. And if it's not
24 arrested in some kind of way, we are
25 going to see some serious accidents

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2 that make the news in a way that we
3 have not heard yet. There are
4 accidents. They are not at the scale
5 that we don't want to see it get to.
6 So be encouraged to know that. And
7 because I know that you are
8 interested, I will make sure that I
9 know that Captain Gilmore reaches to
10 you as we look to craft a resolution
11 around hearings on this issue.

12 The entertainment tourism
13 ideas are brilliant. And I'm excited
14 by your contribution. And as the
15 attorney here has said, they are
16 proven. So thank you for sharing
17 that as well.

18 Yesterday -- many of you
19 did not have the benefit of
20 yesterday's testimony. But a number
21 of candidates indicated the rich
22 opportunities that come around
23 tourism and hospitality, if we can
24 find a smarter way to connect those
25 two worlds.

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2 So that really, as far as I
3 can see, is an untapped area. And as
4 you well put, Mr. Siegel, a rich
5 opportunity for revenue generation
6 for the money desperately needed for
7 programming which we know still has a
8 lot of space for growth as well. So
9 the testimony of all of you is very,
10 very appreciated and very, very
11 informative.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
13 you. Okay.

14 And next up we are going to
15 have Matthew Whitehorn, AJ Thompson
16 and M. Kelly Tillery. And after them
17 David Tukey, Robert Vance and Joy
18 Vargese. Mr. Whitehorn and
19 Mr. Thompson and Ms. Tillery and
20 Mr. David Tukey and Robert Vance and
21 Joy Vargese. All right. So why
22 don't we start with Mr. Whitehorn.

23 MR. WHITEHORN: Thank you,
24 Councilwoman Bass. I would like to
25 thank the Council members for taking

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2 the time to attend the hearing. I
3 would like to note that I really
4 think the Commission, being a new
5 entity, has done a fantastic job with
6 the limited resources it has. I
7 actually don't have that much
8 experience with the Park system. I
9 will get into a little bit of the
10 experience I do have.

11 But I was actually inspired
12 by the editorial in the Inquirer
13 that said, Please come help us if you
14 want to help us. So I will not read
15 my written remarks, which I have
16 submitted already. But what I would
17 like to focus on is that I have been
18 all over the City because my son
19 plays baseball in Philadelphia
20 publicly. And while a lot of
21 facilities are great in the Park
22 system, the recreation centers, a lot
23 of the facilities are not so great.

24 We have played on some
25 baseball fields where the hops off

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2 the infield have been unbelievable,
3 other fields that have glass on them,
4 other fields where we have played at
5 where the bleachers are essentially
6 caving in and numerous other problems
7 of lack of maintenance.

8 And my experience is in
9 traveling all over the City and
10 seeing some of these facilities has
11 really motivated me to try to do
12 something to better the facilities so
13 our kids have a nice place to play
14 baseball. And it's not just
15 baseball. It's soccer. It's
16 whatever the kids are doing on a lot
17 of these public fields.

18 I have also been at a lot
19 of the rec facilities because they
20 border the baseball field. I have
21 been to Markward, which is right near
22 my house, is pretty nice. But there
23 is other rec facilities in the City
24 that also need a lot of help.

25 I think that I can help is

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2 I'm an ERISA tax lawyer in Center
3 City. I have a lot of experience
4 dealing with financial issues and in
5 the fund raising area. I'm on a lot
6 of tax-exempt organization boards
7 that rely on fund raising to maintain
8 their existence. And I believe I can
9 help reach out to the private sector
10 for some financial support if we
11 can't raise sufficient tax revenue or
12 money to do so to support the Parks
13 and Recreation system. And I'm not
14 afraid to make the ask to people
15 since I have been forced to do so by
16 some of the Committees I have been on
17 and tax-exempt organizations. So I
18 think I can help out that way. And
19 I'm really motivated and I've grown
20 to like public league sports and I
21 would really like to improve the
22 recreational facilities in the City.

23 I also happen to live on
24 the same block as the O'Connor
25 swimming pool. When it was closed a

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2 couple of years ago, I realized how
3 detrimental that is to the youth in
4 our area who did not have anywhere
5 else to go when it was 95 and 100
6 degrees and had to go with the
7 sprinklers at the Taney Playground.

8 So I am really motivated to
9 try to help, and I think I have some
10 of the background professionally and
11 aspirationally that I can help the
12 Commission. Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
14 you for your testimony. Now, we have
15 Mr. Thompson.

16 MR. THOMPSON: Good
17 afternoon, Council members.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
19 afternoon.

20 MR. THOMPSON: I noticed
21 Councilwoman Sanchez is here. It's
22 my pleasure to have applied for this
23 position. I applied last time as
24 well. I'm glad there is a public
25 process for this because what I need

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2 to say is something that I think kind
3 of goes unsaid very often here. I'm
4 not trying to embarrass anybody but I
5 am one of the younger people here
6 today. And I think as a father of
7 four daughters in this City, I think
8 a lot of us in my generation are
9 fighting to give our kids the minimum
10 of what we had as kids. And that's a
11 sad thing.

12 I will take us back to 2008
13 when a lot of us fought to keep our
14 libraries open. I grew up -- my
15 father was a police officer. My
16 mother was a bank teller. We didn't
17 have a computer. We went to the
18 library for a computer.

19 Currently I work for the
20 District Attorney's office and I see
21 a lot of kids. I don't work in the
22 juvenile section. But I do see the
23 kids who get to be adults. And as my
24 father, a former PAL officer would
25 say -- he was in the commercials back

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2 in the seventies -- it cost seventy
3 cents to keep in a kid in PAL and a
4 lot more to keep him in jail.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Right.

6 MR. THOMPSON: I would say
7 at this point in our City's history,
8 we have never been teetering on the
9 brink of such a lack of opportunity
10 of young kids at their local
11 playground and parks as we are now.
12 As the father of four daughters, I go
13 to a lot of playgrounds. And when
14 you go to playgrounds in the suburbs,
15 they are really nice.

16 It's a shame; isn't it.
17 You go to your local playground and
18 there is no gate. There is ripped up
19 concrete or whatever the new rubber
20 thing down is ripped all over the
21 place. There is graffiti everywhere.
22 When you bring your child there you
23 have to justify that someday it will
24 be better.

25 Throughout my 35 years here

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2 in Philadelphia, I have tried to make
3 things better. And I have done --
4 and Councilwoman Sanchez is very
5 aware of this -- because the
6 playground exists in her district.
7 Up until last year it was the last
8 cinder field in Philadelphia.

9 And I have worked with her
10 office as well as the reconstruction
11 of the high school there, I'm proud
12 to say it now has grass. I used it
13 on my Christmas card because it
14 was -- it was a miracle. For 60
15 years the kids in Fishtown played on
16 cinders. And those who grew up in
17 the City and played sports will tell
18 you they probably still have cinders
19 in their legs from sliding around the
20 baseball field there.

21 What I hope to bring to the
22 Commission is an energy, for the
23 Park, for recreation. When I was --
24 I came back from Duke University for
25 law school to my own career's

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2 detriment but to my personal
3 enjoyment and personal satisfaction.

4 I joined the Rec department as a
5 part-time employee at Hancock
6 Playground. I worked there through
7 law school and got a chance to
8 implement a lot of programs, some of
9 which are still around. But
10 unfortunately no matter what lip
11 service is given here by whoever has
12 some sort of stake in saying that the
13 kids in the City have an opportunity
14 to play ball, they certainly do not.

15 And I would say if anybody
16 really looks at the current state of
17 youth activities and cultural
18 organizations in the City just
19 compared from five to ten years ago,
20 they will find there is not the
21 opportunity that existed just five to
22 ten years ago and certainly not the
23 kind that existed when I was a boy 20
24 years ago.

25 So when I was a kid you

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2 walked around with your youth jacket
3 on because you played ball or you
4 were in Scouts or you did
5 cheerleading or you did something at
6 a playground, wherever it was. You
7 walked around the City. Nowadays
8 you see a kid with a jacket on. It's
9 an Eagles jacket but it certainly
10 isn't a Feltonville jacket or one of
11 the number of organizations that
12 existed when I was a kid that don't
13 exist nowadays.

14 I would say that the best
15 thing that we can do to demonstrate
16 the disparity between the opportunity
17 the kids in this City have and the
18 kids who just live outside the City,
19 go to a playground on Saturday
20 morning.

21 Now, we were lucky enough
22 in Fishtown to have a really great
23 youth athletic program still going
24 on, people like myself, a man named
25 Dave Dougherty who just passed away

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2 led the organization for 25 years.

3 We were lucky to have him.

4 But you go somewhere else
5 and you won't see that. But if you
6 go to Elkins Park or somewhere in the
7 suburbs, go there on Saturday
8 morning. I just want to say -- I
9 have probably come up on my time --

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

11 MR. THOMPSON: But I will
12 say you'll have a hard time finding
13 someone who has more passion and more
14 knowledge of the nitty-gritty of what
15 needs to be done to bring this level
16 of recreation participation back to
17 where it should be. And I would like
18 to be the person in the Commission to
19 do that. So thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
21 you. Very good. Mr. Tillery.

22 MR. TILLERY: Thank you,
23 Councilwoman. My name is M. Kelly
24 Tillery. I'm a partner in the
25 Intellectual Property Division in the

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2 Philadelphia-based national law firm
3 of Pepper Hamilton.

4 Philadelphia is my adopted
5 City and I love it dearly. I was
6 educated in this area at Swarthmore
7 College and Penn Law School. I have
8 lived and worked in the City since
9 1976, although I was born and bred in
10 New Orleans, Louisiana. And I lost
11 my accent by staying here for a
12 while.

13 I have come to the point in
14 my career and my life where I find I
15 have the time and opportunity, the
16 expertise and the experience to give
17 back to the City that I love to try
18 to pay it back, I suppose, to pay the
19 people back for all that I have
20 gained and my business has gained and
21 my family has gained. I have three
22 children.

23 But I wish to give back to
24 this adopted City of mine in exchange
25 for all that's been given to me.

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2 With respect, I believe I am uniquely
3 qualified by way of experience,
4 education and expertise to bring
5 great value to the Parks and
6 Recreation Department and thus to the
7 City. I have extensive experience
8 and expertise in law, business and
9 politics. As a frequent public
10 speaker, author and amateur
11 historian, I have a special interest
12 in using my skills and experience to
13 assist the Commission to better the
14 City.

15 Although by experience I am
16 a litigator of intellectual property
17 disputes, I think of myself as a
18 problem solver for my clients. My
19 goal in any matter, and in particular
20 those matters I handle for my clients
21 is to bring them to timely, favorable
22 and economical conclusions.

23 I will take my skills in
24 doing so to the Commission, should
25 you in your wisdom choose to

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2 recommend me to the Mayor and he
3 accepts me.

4 I anticipate bringing all
5 of those skills to the Commission.
6 In addition, I have a particular
7 knack or interest in history. I
8 would like to use my knowledge and
9 interest in history and architecture
10 to develop and to exploit the City's
11 rich history and expand tourism. I
12 think the Commission can do a lot in
13 support of that.

14 And in that regard I have
15 recently spearheaded an effort to on
16 June 16 of this year -- and I invite
17 the Council members to attend -- at
18 Logan Square at 11 a.m. we will be
19 dedicating a historical marker on the
20 spot in 1864 where the United States
21 Sanitary Commission held its Great
22 Central Fair and, in fact, the spot
23 where President Abraham Lincoln gave
24 his only official speech in the City
25 of Philadelphia. You may find it odd

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2 that there is no historical marker.
3 But after June 16th there will be and
4 we will have a nice affair with some
5 reenactors and, in fact, President
6 Lincoln himself is going to reenact
7 his speech as he gave it on June
8 16th.

9 I have provided some
10 letters of recommendation, I have
11 copies of my testimony and I am
12 prepared to answer questions as well.
13 Should I hand out my testimony and
14 copies?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Someone
16 will come get them. Thank you so
17 much.

18 MR. TILLERY: Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Are
20 there any questions?

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
22 BROWN: Can you just repeat that?
23 June 16th.

24 MR. TILLERY: June 16th at
25 11 a.m. at Logan Square. We will

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2 have a reenactor band, a lot of
3 reenactors from the Civil War era and
4 a gentleman named Jim Getty who is an
5 incredible performer and looks just
6 like Abraham Lincoln. He is going to
7 repeat the President's speech. So it
8 should be an interesting affair. And
9 we will now have a marker where the
10 President actually spoke.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Oh,
12 wow. Thank you very much. If you
13 have more information or something --

14 MR. TILLERY: Actually,
15 it's in the package.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very
17 good. Any other questions of the
18 panel? Councilman Johnson.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just a
20 quick statement. Thank you. Thank
21 you for applying, Mr. Whitehorn. I
22 think your background in taxation can
23 really play a major role in how we
24 move this City forward at this
25 particular time. But it's good to

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2 have someone who has a vested
3 interest with their children being a
4 part of our public sports in the
5 City. And AJ, since I know you in a
6 professional capacity. But I
7 actually am excited sitting here just
8 as a Joe Citizen, wanting to get
9 involved from another perspective.
10 And so I commend you for the work
11 that you do you for the City from a
12 public safety standpoint.

13 But the other part of
14 public safety is what you talked
15 about as well is making sure that --
16 I hear a lot of our park -- I always
17 put for the record, I support our
18 parks, bicycle trails, Wissahickon
19 Valley Green, Pennypack Park. I also
20 have a strong interest in our
21 recreation centers.

22 And it's important to make
23 sure the type of programming
24 available for young people to go
25 there. And last but not least even

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2 as I wrap up, I also emphasize, we
3 want to get additional revenue
4 through public/private partnerships.
5 We never want that to be a reason why
6 we don't have dedicated sources
7 coming from taxpayer dollars. I
8 think that played a major role in
9 why, at least from my perspective
10 looking at it from the outside in, is
11 how Parks and Recs could be flatlined
12 over a period of time because you can
13 always make up the money with outside
14 additional revenue.

15 But hopefully, we will find
16 a way to keep a balance as we move
17 forward so we can get the dedicated
18 revenue in addition to outside
19 revenue. But thank you all for being
20 here and welcome here from Louisiana.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
22 you so much for your testimony.
23 Thank you, gentlemen. Okay. Next we
24 are going to have Mr. David Tukey,
25 Robert Vance, Mr. Jojy Varghese. And

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2 actually that, if we want to have
3 come forward, Dennis Waller, Kellen
4 White, if they are here. And you
5 are, sir?

6 MR. WHITE: Kellen White.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And
8 also if we could have come forward
9 Suzanne B. Anderson, if she's here.
10 And Edward Drayton. Let's get
11 started with Mr. Tukey.

12 MR. TUKEY: Good afternoon.
13 My name is David Tukey. And I am
14 pleased to accept your invitation to
15 meet with you for coffee next
16 Wednesday in Mt. Airy.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very
18 good.

19 MR. TUKEY: I would like to
20 thank members of Council for
21 listening to my testimony at budget
22 hearings for the last three years.
23 It's also my privilege to listen to
24 your questions during the
25 Commissioner's testimony, Council for

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2 the last three years. I am here to
3 talk about the trees.

4 By Commonwealth statute,
5 Philadelphia's Shade Tree
6 Commission's responsibilities are
7 vested in Fairmount Park and then now
8 in the Department of Parks and
9 Recreation. Across the Commonwealth,
10 there are organizations called Shade
11 Tree Commissions that meet and have
12 public testimony about trees: tree
13 removals, tree plantings, tree
14 organizations, tree ceremonies, all
15 kinds of things.

16 In Philadelphia that's
17 vested in the Department of Parks &
18 Recreation. I happen to be a
19 specialist on trees. That's my
20 background. That's why I'm here. I
21 am here because I want to make sure
22 trees have a voice. The mandate from
23 the Commonwealth is to this
24 organization and City Council to make
25 sure we have a vibrant Shade Tree

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2 Commission, and we don't currently
3 have that, unfortunately, I don't
4 believe.

5 How do we get to there? My
6 vision is that we have that vibrancy.
7 How do we get there? And my vision
8 is -- and it's in my materials -- is
9 in the diagram about
10 neighborhood-based community forestry
11 efforts, that somehow we take our
12 number one resource, people, and its
13 interest in trees and interest in
14 environment to work together at the
15 local level so that we have like mini
16 Shade Tree Commissions all throughout
17 Philadelphia, harnessing the number
18 one resource of its people.

19 I hate to think of what it
20 would be like if Councilman Johnson
21 was riding on that trail and a branch
22 fell. I hate to think of what
23 happens at recreation centers when a
24 branch falls. Last week in the New
25 York Times, there is a series of

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2 three articles talking about tree
3 failures in the City of New York.

4 The settlements of those
5 suits were four million dollars. We
6 are asking for eight million dollars
7 to increase the Parks & Recreations
8 budget. Half of that can go with one
9 branch failure. So we need to have
10 safe trees and they need to be
11 inspected. So we need to have
12 inspectors.

13 So my testimony about the
14 budget talked about all these kinds
15 of issues. Can we have people on the
16 ground, citizens, helping inspectors
17 look at trees, targeting trees that
18 are problems. At Penn State they
19 know where the problem trees are when
20 storms hit. They go out there and
21 are near those trees so if there is a
22 problem with that, it's addressed
23 immediately.

24 Is there a way that
25 citizens can work with the community

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2 forestry staff of the park system to
3 work on these kinds of efforts? The
4 City of Austin, Texas has a process
5 of training urban foresters to work
6 with forestry staff, unlike anybody
7 else. I regret that Councilman Oh is
8 not here because that's my answer to
9 his question when he asked me that
10 day at the budget hearing. It was
11 Austin, Texas that has that.

12 We have a problem in Mt.
13 Airy with trees near power lines
14 being cut the wrong ways. Cities in
15 Florida have found ways to improve
16 those standards by working with the
17 power company and not against them,
18 find ways to find out where the best
19 management practices are around the
20 country on those kinds of efforts.

21 Councilman Oh asked about
22 other kinds of funding sources. I am
23 aware a little bit about what
24 Minneapolis has and others. But
25 let's take an opportunity to research

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2 those. He talked about engagement.

3 I would love to be engaged with the

4 Committee to look on those kinds of

5 issues, to help you research those

6 kinds of issues, whether I'm a member

7 of the Commission or not. Harness

8 the number one resource and you will

9 make great strides.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank

11 you so much. And I just want to for

12 just one quick second clarify for the

13 meeting -- just so they are talking

14 about trees, no shade -- where we are

15 meeting as part of our Coffee With

16 the Councilwomen series. Everyone is

17 invited to that.

18 Next is Mr. Vance.

19 MR. VANCE: Good afternoon,

20 Chairwoman Bass.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

22 afternoon.

23 MR. VANCE: It's a pleasure

24 to say that. And good afternoon to

25 the rest of the members of the

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 Committee. My name is Robert Vance
3 and I am 55 years old. I live in Mt.
4 Airy and I have three children. I'm
5 an attorney in private practice since
6 1985. I have served on the Board of
7 Directors of a number of nonprofit
8 organizations in the City since I
9 graduated from law school in 1982,
10 including the Friends of the
11 Wissahickon since 1997. And I served
12 as president of Friends of the
13 Wissahickon from 2009 until 2011.

14 I have also served the City
15 as the chairman of the City Planning
16 Commission from 1992 to '98. During
17 that same time period, I was a member
18 of the Board of Directors of the
19 Philadelphia Industrial Development
20 Corporation, the Historical
21 Commission and the Penn's Landing
22 Corporation.

23 I have actively
24 participated in the political life of
25 this City, by serving as the

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2 Democratic Ward Leader for the 22nd
3 Ward from 1994 to 2002 and as a
4 Democratic committeeperson in the
5 22nd Ward from 1990 to 2006. I am a
6 lifelong runner and an avid user of
7 Fairmount Park for that purpose and
8 for other recreational purposes with
9 both myself and with my family.

10 I believe I would be a
11 valuable member of the Commission on
12 Parks and Recreation because I have
13 the experience and skills that are
14 relevant to the powers and the duties
15 of the Commission. I have innovative
16 ideas concerning how the Commission
17 can achieve the goals outlined in the
18 Charter.

19 My record of service to the
20 City through governmental nonprofit
21 organizations shows that I have the
22 breadth and depth of experience that
23 would be invaluable to the
24 Commission. I understand how City
25 government works, why it does not

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2 always work as efficiently and
3 effectually as it could and how
4 nongovernmental organizations can and
5 often do fill the service void that's
6 created by scarce City resources.

7 My experience as chairman
8 of the City Planning Commission
9 provided me with hands-on experience
10 concerning the annual City capital
11 budget process and the importance of
12 planned as compared to haphazard
13 growth and development. And that
14 experience would be valuable to the
15 Commission.

16 We cannot allow City Parks
17 and Recreation land and facilities to
18 be administered, maintained, promoted
19 or funded in a disorganized fashion.
20 I believe in these different economic
21 times the Commission has to make sure
22 that the resources that are allocated
23 to the Department of Parks and
24 Recreation are put to their best and
25 highest use. They promote the

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2 responsible use of the City's Parks
3 and Recreation land and facilities
4 and assist the Department in finding
5 and utilizing alternative sources of
6 funding for the Parks & Recreation
7 system that will not compromise the
8 integrity of the Parks and Recreation
9 system or result in a reduction in
10 green space or the unnecessary
11 conveyance of Parks and Recreation
12 land or facilities.

13 Fairmount Park is a jewel
14 and it's one of the most attractive
15 features of our City. And if I am
16 nominated to be a member of the
17 Commission on Parks and Recreation, I
18 will do everything in my power to
19 make sure that Fairmount Park remains
20 that jewel for many generations to
21 come. Thank you for your time.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
23 you, Mr. Vance. And Mr. Varghese.

24 MR. VARGHESE: Thank you.
25 Good afternoon, respected members of

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 Council. My name is Jojy Varghese
3 and I am Chief of Staff for State
4 Representative Tony Payton, Jr. I'm
5 a lifelong Philadelphian and it's my
6 great pleasure to address you all
7 today and highlight why I would be a
8 strong choice to join your esteemed
9 Commission.

10 Born and raised in
11 Philadelphia, I have an ardent
12 passion for my hometown and
13 continually strive to find ways to
14 promote the vitality of my City.
15 Parks and Recreation is one of the
16 handful of municipal departments that
17 really does get it. And I laud the
18 efforts of Deputy DiBerardinis and
19 his widely successful leadership
20 team.

21 As an undergraduate of Penn
22 State, I organized intramural efforts
23 specific to athletic programming,
24 field selection and maintenance. I
25 managed teams from football to

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2 softball to even badminton and
3 successfully championed the creation
4 of a roller hockey rink. I have
5 utilized dozens of local parks here
6 in the past decade while captaining
7 numerous recreational teams spanning
8 much of our vast park system. I even
9 have a softball doubleheader in a few
10 hours if the rain holds up for it.

11 Last year, I earned my MPA
12 from the Fels Institute of Government
13 at Penn and used my electives to
14 learn more about sustainability and
15 watershed management.

16 Upon graduation, I was
17 chosen to the State Rep. Tony Payton
18 Jr.'s Chief of Staff and in this role
19 have been actively working to
20 revitalize neighborhoods in a number
21 of innovative and budget neutral, or
22 at least cost effective ways, as my
23 application package depicts.

24 As a first time homeowner
25 in Society Hill, I attend monthly

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2 meetings of the Civic Association
3 which have been informative for my
4 work in Frankford, as I also attend
5 8-9 other civic community meetings
6 across our many neighborhoods in the
7 district. We have numerous projects
8 in our pipeline there that align with
9 Mayor Nutter and PWD's storm water
10 management agenda, such as the
11 clearing and greening of vacant lots,
12 the preservation of more open public
13 spaces and the potential greening of
14 the Market-Frankford EL via the use
15 of "Living Walls."

16 We work alongside the
17 Horticultural Center, the Fairmount
18 Park Conservancy and, of course,
19 Parks and Recreation on numerous
20 projects such as the renovation of
21 Womrath Park, the Shane Victorino
22 Boys and Girls Club, Hunting Park
23 revitalization efforts and, of
24 course, Tree Philly, from which I
25 recently received my Eastern Red Bud

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2 and have two more arriving on behalf
3 of my parents in the Far Northeast.
4 I am also on the Steering Committee
5 for the Lower NE District Planning
6 Process.

7 As a student and graduate
8 intern, I worked in Mayor Rendell's
9 Internship Program, the Inspector
10 General's Office, the Commerce
11 Department, Planning Commission, Arts
12 Historical, PWD, L&I, Streets and
13 more. I clearly believe in public
14 service and the importance of civic
15 duty.

16 I was also a senior
17 management consultant at Booz Allen
18 Hamilton in DC and here locally at
19 Accenture and thus have a sense of
20 what works in both private and public
21 environments and what ideas can be
22 effectively shared. With Booz Allen,
23 I was engaged on high profile public
24 sector initiatives to drive broad
25 change in federal government and I

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2 think the diversity of my experiences
3 will serve the board well.

4 From my current role
5 serving the 179th to the Boards on
6 which I serve, I seek ways to make
7 direct impact with minimal
8 investment. The reality is that
9 collectively we are facing an
10 especially difficult economic period
11 and I'm proud of the various ways in
12 which we sought new development,
13 redefining what it means to invest in
14 your community and the sustainable
15 payout we can all expect.

16 I'm submitting Letters of
17 Support from Kathryn Ott Lovell from
18 the Fairmount Park Conservancy, Paul
19 Levy with the Center City District
20 and, of course, State Rep. Tony
21 Payton, Jr.

22 Lastly I believe Fairmount
23 Park is a world-class resource and we
24 are blessed to have such visionary
25 planning devoted to it. I have been

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2 engaged in local civic service since
3 high school and I have great pride in
4 witnessing the advancements our City
5 has achieved. One Department that
6 stands out for these wins is
7 Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation
8 and it would be an honor to serve on
9 its Board to the best of my ability.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
11 you very much. Councilman Johnson.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just a
13 quick small statement. Gentlemen,
14 Mr. Tukey, I just want to let you
15 know, very interesting approach. I
16 participated in Tree Vitalize
17 Initiative -- I think it was with the
18 Philadelphia Conservatory and the
19 Philadelphia Parks and Alliance
20 partnership down in FDR Park, trying
21 to make the City of Philadelphia one
22 of the greenest cities in 2015. But
23 I want to also make sure that vision
24 in making Philadelphia the greatest
25 city in the country matches up with

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2 the support and resources for Parks
3 and Rec because we are doing a good
4 job in the amount of goals that
5 are -- how do I say it -- not
6 directly related to Parks and
7 Recreation, if you know what I mean,
8 in terms of financial support
9 standpoint.

10 But also there was one of
11 my former colleagues had a certain
12 playground community event and a tree
13 happened to fall on a constituent who
14 is still in a wheelchair to this day.
15 So when you talked about it, it was
16 kind of unique.

17 But also, the importance
18 that trees play to our environment
19 from a breathing standpoint and
20 particularly for people that suffer
21 from asthma, more of its improvement
22 in the quality of our air, in our
23 surroundings and urban environment.
24 So very unique perspective in your
25 approach. So I wanted to touch base

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2 on it. That's all.

3 MR. TUKEY: I just want to
4 say briefly, my testimony to Council
5 with the budget talked about the
6 benefit of trees. You can look at
7 that material. I did not bring that
8 today but it's important.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All
10 right. Thank you. Councilwoman
11 Brown?

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
13 BROWN: I'm compelled to comment as
14 well. Yesterday Councilwoman
15 Quinones posed the question: What
16 out of the box innovative offerings
17 can you propose for the Commission?
18 And this is certainly out of the box.
19 Very different and unique offering
20 and the first that I have heard of
21 all the great testimony we have heard
22 of focus on urban forestry and what
23 that could look like currently.
24 Except for Outward Bound -- is that
25 the name of it? With the exception

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2 of that, this becomes one of those
3 innovative interest areas that urban
4 young people could certainly benefit
5 from as simply knowing it as a career
6 option 'cause ultimately that's why
7 we are doing most of this: exposure,
8 exposure, exposure to our young
9 people to broaden and deepen their
10 career options.

11 MR. TUKEY: Just in
12 reference to that briefly, Aubrey*
13 Arboretum has a program to train
14 youth in urban forestry kinds of
15 programs. But we don't know about
16 it. And is there a way to take those
17 resources we have, those jewels that
18 are so hidden and expand them.
19 That's what we need is opportunities
20 to expand it and advocates to make
21 that happen. That's what we need.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just
23 had an opportunity to tour their
24 program last week. It's fantastic.
25 Thank you for your comments. See you

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2 on the trail, Mr. Vance. Thank you.

3 And next we are going to
4 have Mr. Waller, Kellen White and
5 Jasmine Williams, Suzanne B.
6 Anderson, Edward Drayton and Dennis
7 Cullen. And you are Mr. Drayton?

8 MR. DRAYTON: Yes, ma'am.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
10 And is there anyone else here to
11 testify who has not spoken or who has
12 submitted application? Okay. So no
13 one else. So this will be our final
14 three. Okay. We can go ahead and
15 start with you, Mr. Waller.

16 MR. WALLER: Yes, thank
17 you, Madam Chair and thank you, City
18 Council members.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
20 you.

21 MR. WALLER: My name is
22 Dennis Waller, and I am a former
23 Deputy Director of the Fairmount Park
24 Commission. I was responsible for
25 Properties and Business Development.

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2 I retired from the City in 2010 as a
3 deputy director of Aviation,
4 Philadelphia National Airport. This
5 is an opportunity that I have
6 considered with the utmost importance
7 as our Parks and Recreation
8 facilities, how they are managed and
9 maintained, directly impact the
10 quality of life for all of us in
11 Philadelphia and our neighboring
12 counties.

13 During my years as a public
14 employee and as a private citizen, I
15 have dedicated myself to that mission
16 in improving the quality of life for
17 my children, my family and the
18 citizens of Philadelphia. My
19 experiences, my education, the
20 opportunities that have been afforded
21 me have all been blessings that I
22 have not and will not take for
23 granted. Philadelphia is a diverse
24 City with a broad spectrum of
25 neighborhoods and ethnic groups.

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2 Oftentimes the way the City
3 government is viewed and measured is
4 by what we can see and what we
5 experience on a daily basis. Our
6 schools, our streets and, yes, our
7 Parks and Recreation facilities are a
8 major part of those experiences.
9 They mean so many things to so many
10 people.

11 To quote one of the Park's
12 many slogans: "Great parks" -- and I
13 would add to that recreation --
14 "facilities make great neighborhoods"
15 and vice versa. It's obvious in
16 neighborhoods where the neighbors
17 have taken ownership in the Parks and
18 Recreation facilities.

19 The balance of
20 volunteerism, public and private
21 funds and grants from philanthropic
22 sources is what it has taken and what
23 it will take to maintain and improve
24 the quality of our Parks and
25 Recreation assets. Assembling,

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2 convening, directing and from a broad
3 perspective managing that balance is
4 a major role of the Commission. And
5 in actuality, this may be the easiest
6 task. The more difficult
7 responsibilities of a Commission
8 developing new sources of funding to
9 maintain and improve existing
10 facilities and finding revenue
11 streams for those projects that the
12 community and Parks and Recreation
13 staff bring to the table and ensure
14 that all these are accessible and
15 affordable to the citizens of
16 Philadelphia.

17 We have done this and we
18 can do this, not without debate and
19 not without good planning and honest
20 interaction. Interaction -- I lost
21 my place -- interaction among all
22 those who have a stake in
23 Philadelphia, a stake that
24 Philadelphia continues to move
25 forward. The models for achieving

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2 this exist. The Water Works
3 Restaurant, parking revenue from
4 major sporting events, the
5 Horticultural Center concessions,
6 fantastic, hard-working Friends
7 Groups and partnerships with
8 universities, schools and
9 organizations like the Center City
10 district is all part of the mix and
11 working well.

12 Where do I believe
13 additional sources and support can be
14 found? Our business and corporate
15 community, the right mix of
16 Commissioners who have and can engage
17 the business community is needed and
18 certainly worth exploring. I'm not
19 naïve enough to believe that this is
20 not already happening. I'm pretty
21 sure that Commissioner DiBerardinis
22 and the current Commissioners are
23 working on these ideas as we speak.

24 In closing, let me say if
25 chosen I will say I will serve to the

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2 best of my abilities. I have the
3 time and the energy and the
4 experiences to make a contribution
5 and it would be an honor to serve on
6 the Parks and Recreation Commission.
7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
9 you. Thank you so much for your
10 testimony today. And next we will
11 hear from Mr. White.

12 MR. WHITE: First and
13 foremost I would like to thank
14 members of the City Council
15 Inspection Committee for allowing me
16 to speak on why I, Kellen White,
17 should be nominated for the
18 Commission of Parks and Recreation.

19 It is both an honor and a
20 humbling experience to sit before
21 you, a candidate amongst the very
22 best the City of Philadelphia has to
23 offer. I currently serve as a youth
24 director of the historic Christian
25 Street YMCA and am responsible for

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2 developing programming for
3 participants from age 2 to age 17,
4 along with managing our American Camp
5 Association Summer Camp. This
6 valuable experience developing
7 programs in an urban setting makes me
8 an asset to the Commission.

9 In my role as Director, I
10 work with the community to ensure
11 that we create programs that not only
12 meet the needs of our members but the
13 needs of our neighbors as well.
14 Under my leadership we have developed
15 several programs and events for the
16 entire community, partnering with
17 community groups such as Rising Sons,
18 PhillyGoes2College, Philadelphia
19 Rising, buildOn and several elected
20 officials. My track record of
21 program development, voluntary
22 mobilization and community activism
23 give me the tools to uplift the Parks
24 and Recreation Department as a member
25 of the Commission.

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2 Ultimately when we think
3 about who the Parks and Recreation
4 system is for, we think of the youth
5 of Philadelphia. I understand that
6 you have an incredibly difficult
7 decision ahead of you. You have
8 heard testimony from some incredibly
9 talented applicants with impressive
10 resumes.

11 But I would ask you to
12 carve out a space for someone who
13 brings to the table a unique
14 perspective of the very young people
15 the Parks and Recreation system is in
16 place for, the young people, who need
17 a vibrant, active Parks and
18 Recreation system now more than ever.

19 Having a young voice at the
20 table would ensure that you have a
21 direct link to what matters to young
22 people. I believe I am uniquely
23 qualified to be that young voice, not
24 simply because of my age but because
25 of my track record as the Program

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2 Director at the Christian Street
3 YMCA.

4 At the Y, my work goes well
5 beyond my job description and duties
6 as I mentioned before. There I go to
7 work each day with the goal of
8 providing an experience that gives
9 them self-esteem, self-worth and lets
10 them know they matter. More
11 importantly, I get to hear their
12 stories of what is on their mind and
13 what matters to them.

14 Many of these children and
15 young people live a little more than
16 a mile from this very room and they
17 believe City Hall is a world away.
18 Many of these young people believe
19 their voice will never be heard and
20 that no one cares if their dreams are
21 realized. Whether their beliefs are
22 true or not, let their voice be heard
23 on this Commission. I believe that
24 my experience working with the youth
25 gives me the invaluable insight to be

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 their voice and their advocate as
3 part of the Commission on Parks and
4 Recreation.

5 I seek to join the
6 Commission on Parks and Recreation
7 not to gain perceived influence or
8 pad my resume. I am seeking the
9 nomination because I want to serve
10 the City of Philadelphia and its
11 citizens. I truly believe that
12 together the Commission can
13 profoundly change the direction of
14 not only the Department of Parks and
15 Recreation but the City as a whole.

16 I know as a member of this
17 Commission, I will help ensure the
18 City of Philadelphia upholds William
19 Penn's vision of a green country town
20 and uplift our youth through positive
21 programming experiences at the Park
22 and Recreation facilities.

23 It is my passion for the
24 City of Philadelphia and our youth
25 that makes me the ideal candidate to

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2 serve on this Commission. Margaret
3 Mead once said, "Never doubt that a
4 small group of thoughtful, committed
5 people can change the world. Indeed,
6 it's the only thing that ever has. I
7 know as a part of this Commission I
8 along with other members would put
9 her words into practice. Thank you
10 for allowing me a portion of your
11 time.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
13 you for your testimony. And Mr.
14 Drayton. Good afternoon.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
16 afternoon.

17 MR. DRAYTON: I first want
18 to say thank you for allowing me to
19 just briefly state why I should be on
20 this panel.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
22 Absolutely.

23 MR. DRAYTON: I passed the
24 testimony up. But just going off the
25 cuff. I just felt as though -- first

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2 of all, my name is Edward Drayton. I
3 am the Advisory Council President of
4 Houseman Recreation Center, lower
5 Northeast section of Philadelphia.
6 I'm the director of for Striving 4
7 Success Youth Organization, mentors
8 at risk youths. I also have a
9 mentors basketball program where I
10 bring kids who may have been in
11 trouble and, you know, have had
12 different ills in their life and I
13 bring them into a program and kind of
14 find out what it is they like to do
15 besides basketball. Like if you
16 couldn't do basketball, what is it
17 that you could do?

18 I make a requirement of
19 that where the City of Philadelphia,
20 the school district, said they need a
21 C average to participate in sports.
22 Well, I make them have a B average,
23 so I implement the education factor
24 into the programming that I do.

25 The purpose of my wanting

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 to be on this panel is I came here
3 four years ago. I was fresh. I
4 never applied for anything like that,
5 you know, been through some things,
6 you know, and really wanted to get
7 back into giving back.

8 And I came here and I sat
9 before -- a few more than four years
10 ago. But I sat in here and gave a
11 brief testimony on why I should be on
12 the panel and I heard a lot of
13 testimony of resumes that were
14 through the roof.

15 And it all came back to,
16 you know, what is it that Parks and
17 Recreation are going to do for the
18 average person. How can the average
19 person benefit? What I found over
20 the four years just sitting back and
21 watching and listening and going to
22 different meetings is it seems to be
23 a disconnect or maybe a lack of
24 communication you can call it.

25 Because if you ask a

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2 layperson from parks, Awbury Park,
3 that knows about planning, about a
4 more beautiful Philadelphia, the tree
5 program, you ask a recreation person,
6 even an advisory council recreation
7 person, they are not going to really
8 know what you're talking about. But
9 if you ask a Park person about, you
10 know, the programming at Chew or at
11 Simons, they probably wouldn't know
12 what you're talking about. So I
13 think it's like a lack of
14 communication somewhere.

15 I attended a meeting last
16 night of advisory meetings all over
17 the City with Deputy Mayor and Susan
18 Slawson. And in that meeting you
19 know there were people who, you know,
20 personally I love, you know, the
21 greener Philadelphia. I'm involved
22 and I participate. I have my
23 programming and my kids who
24 participate in it.

25 But I'm more of a

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2 Recreations person. I feel like
3 Recreations is what's needed to move
4 further with the City because of the
5 youth. If the youth are going to be
6 the future of the City, then I think
7 that we feed more emphasis on
8 recreations and getting the centers
9 back up to par and, you know,
10 bringing more programming, just
11 overall making Recreations like when
12 I was growing up. When I was growing
13 up, you know, it was boxing programs.

14 Nowadays a kid gets a kick
15 out of beating an old person up
16 because there is no communication,
17 you know. If you have never been
18 told anything, no one never told you:
19 Don't cross on a red light. You
20 would cross on a red light.

21 I say that to say most of
22 it comes with just communicating and
23 just elaborating on, you know, the
24 young man where he says it's
25 something that is different that's

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2 needed. This needs to be something
3 different implemented into the
4 overall perspective of where Parks
5 and Recreations wants to go and not
6 just a board where someone who may
7 have never have been to an event at
8 Chew Playground, who has never even,
9 how can you know, how can you
10 understand what's going on with
11 Recreations when, you know, all you
12 know is the bike trail or, you know,
13 how can you understand that?

14 That's where I bring to the
15 panel -- I just bring that different
16 perspective of an outlook on, you
17 know, from a youth perspective where
18 just educating our youth will help
19 Parks and will help Recreation.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
21 Well, thank you very much for your
22 testimony, all three of you for your
23 testimony. We have two other folks
24 to testify that just arrived.
25 Comment, Councilwoman Brown?

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2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS

3 BROWN: It is incredibly important
4 that we have the voices, thinking,
5 participation of young people in all
6 matters of government. So to see the
7 presence of a number of young people
8 come and testify is a reaffirmation
9 we are not doing enough as a
10 government to create access for young
11 people to be actively engaged through
12 the Youth Commission which I will say
13 with tongue-in-cheek came out of my
14 office four years ago, demonstrated
15 there is an enormous interest.

16 Young people just want the
17 opportunity to sit around a table and
18 be engaged. So I have made lots of
19 notes and will be making a proposal
20 to the Mayor to see how we better
21 engage young people on the public
22 policy side with regard to our parks.
23 So know your voice has been heard.
24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Think we

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 could get him hired by the Recreation
3 Commission?

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
5 BROWN: That would be a beginning,
6 wouldn't it? Of course, Councilman
7 Kenyatta Johnson might not be happy
8 to see him leave his Councilmanic
9 District.

10 (Laughter.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS
12 BROWN: But we would love to see that
13 expertise taken citywide. Thank you,
14 Councilman. Councilman Johnson.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.
16 I just wanted to say that, of course,
17 I would like to keep Kellen at the
18 historic Christian Street YMCA with
19 the great work that he is doing but
20 importantly, Kellen, I just wanted to
21 say that this feels good just to be
22 sitting up here and watching you do
23 this presentation and getting
24 involved as a young person.

25 I know your work in part in

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2 which you were my annual Kiddie
3 Olympics and I was sitting back and
4 watching you with the kids. And also
5 both of you, the panel as a whole
6 talked about the other side of Parks
7 and Rec which is recreation. And I
8 think we talk about youth violence
9 and we talk about improving quality
10 of life of our district and you talk
11 making sure we don't have flash mobs
12 during the summers: That's engaging
13 young people inside our rec centers.

14 And Councilwoman Reynolds
15 Brown talked about these Youth Access
16 Centers. There is one at Myers Rec
17 Center with like a big screen
18 television. The kids come in. They
19 play Wii. They play PlayStation. So
20 I figure we have more of that.

21 We can go back to making
22 those type of resources available at
23 the recreation centers. I think that
24 would really improve the quality of
25 life of our City from a public safety

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 standpoint. Give me something to do.

3 Keep me involved. And I won't stand

4 on a corner. It's real, real simple.

5 And so we want to deal with

6 the Ray-Rays of the world and you

7 talked about finding young people

8 who are in between. You know, just

9 need a positive outlet to enjoy

10 themselves, whether it be boxing,

11 football, baseball.

12 But I will echo one last

13 thing. Whether you are picked or

14 not, just in general. This is for

15 everybody that is sitting here.

16 There are some great ideas to get

17 involved with the Committees in terms

18 of moving forward with Parks and

19 Recreation. I will put that out for

20 people just in general. There is a

21 lot of good ideas.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank

23 you. I do want -- any additional

24 questions or comments? I do want to

25 acknowledge -- thank you so much for

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 your testimony. I do want to
3 acknowledge that we have been joined
4 by Council Majority Leader Curtis
5 Jones, Jr. Thank you.

6 And we are going to call up
7 the last two speakers of the day
8 which is Matysik, George Matysik and
9 also Susan B. Anderson.

10 MR. MATYSIK: Good
11 afternoon.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
13 afternoon.

14 MR. MATYSIK: Good
15 afternoon, everyone. My name is
16 George Matysik. I'm Deputy Director
17 of Planning for Philabundance, the
18 food bank for the Delaware Valley.
19 I'm also a lifelong Philadelphian and
20 lifelong visitor of our Parks and
21 Recreation facilities since my days
22 at Sonny Hill's basketball camp at
23 Jardel Rec in the Northeast.

24 We all clearly know what
25 needs to be done. We know that our

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 system is funded at a lower rate than
3 many other cities. New York and
4 Chicago spend roughly \$150 per
5 resident on the park system. We
6 spend just \$35 per person. So the
7 challenge is to ensure that number
8 remains where it is or grows -- with
9 less reliance on the general fund,
10 and, I hope, less reliance on the
11 taxpayer. As many of you saw when
12 you visited the Philabundance a few
13 months back, we have a robust and
14 growing operation, but one which
15 couldn't have achieved what we have
16 without diversified streams of
17 funding (and food). I think Parks
18 and Recreation should be no different
19 in its approach, much like a family
20 saving for retirement, is the only
21 way to reduce risk.

22 How do we get there?
23 Obviously, as many before me have
24 stated, we know we need to continue
25 to grow public/private partnerships.

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2 This is something I have extensive
3 experience in, as attested by my
4 three references: Philabundance CEO,
5 Bill Clark; Congressman Bob Brady;
6 and Mario Cimino, Eastern Regional
7 Director of the Commonwealth's oldest
8 environmental nonprofit and President
9 of Morton Borough Council in Delaware
10 County.

11 I believe every P3
12 opportunity should at least be
13 explored, including sponsorship and
14 naming opportunities, legacy planning
15 for 2026, and further growing hyper
16 local funding or parks, both through
17 Friends Groups and the Battery Park
18 model of local fees. My experience
19 in growing such partnerships is
20 extensive, including working with
21 many of you to develop Philabundance
22 programs at City sites within your
23 districts.

24 I also have significant
25 experience working on both sides of

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 the aisle in Harrisburg, Washington
3 and within local municipalities.

4 With so many of the City's
5 legislative priorities being
6 discussed in our capitals, I want to
7 ensure that the voice of the Parks
8 and Recreation users is heard, and
9 that we can fight for the few
10 resources remaining. At
11 Philabundance, I have helped secure
12 millions of dollars in capital
13 funding from bipartisan supporters at
14 a time when state and federal funding
15 is in decline.

16 Finally keeping my
17 Philabundance hat on, I want to
18 ensure in this process we don't
19 overlook the additional services
20 available at our recreation centers.
21 Currently over 50,000 kids are served
22 summer meals at Parks, Recreation and
23 other sites throughout the City. We
24 need to ensure that essential
25 programs like these remain intact,

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 and that more programs are given the
3 opportunity to grow.

4 The bottom line is Parks
5 and Recreation is not funded at the
6 essential service that it is. And in
7 fairness with so many essential
8 programs in the City budget, it can
9 be incredibly difficult to choose one
10 over another. And while we can
11 debate the validity of the
12 designation of a parking tax and
13 parking ticket fees, the bottom line
14 is that we as citizens need to find
15 new and sustainable funding streams
16 to prepare the Parks and Recreation
17 Department, not just for this budget
18 cycle, but for the next one, and the
19 one after that.

20 Thank you for the
21 opportunity to present and I look
22 forward to your questions.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
24 you for your testimony. And
25 Ms. Anderson, you may begin.

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2 MS. ANDERSON: Greening and

3 safety. These seem to be the most
4 visual issues facing the Commission
5 on Parks and Recreation these days.

6 Chairwoman Reynolds Brown and the
7 rest of City Council, I appreciate
8 this opportunity to speak to you

9 today. I'm Suzanne Anderson and I'm
10 a proud homeowner of the Cedar Park
11 section of West Philadelphia. I have
12 a Bachelor's of Arts degree in
13 journalism and a Master of Social
14 Work from Temple University. And
15 three days ago I got my JD from
16 Widener University School of Law.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

18 Congratulations.

19 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you.

20 I'm also a proud wife and mother of
21 two daughters who attend the public
22 school system, including long time
23 ago Powel with Ms. Reynolds Brown's
24 child. And my children go to the
25 summer recreation program at the

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 Annenberg Center through the Young
3 Performers Theater Camp.

4 I would be an effective
5 member of the Commission because I am
6 a passionate advocate for my City,
7 for my neighborhood and for my block.
8 I would represent West Philadelphia
9 and contribute towards improving the
10 quality of life for all
11 Philadelphians.

12 I have talked to many
13 people in my neighborhood and across
14 the City, and some things are very
15 clear. Green initiatives in making
16 neighborhoods more beautiful help to
17 manage storm water and filter the
18 air. I would be a strong advocate to
19 build on the many successes that this
20 Commission has already brought to
21 life in making more green space
22 available throughout the City.

23 Honestly right now, I don't
24 have a sophisticated analysis of the
25 policies and procedures of the

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 Commission on Parks and Recreation.

3 But I am committed to greening the

4 City and preserving the environment,

5 in preserving community treasures

6 such as Fairmount Park and its

7 glorious mansions as well as the many

8 other historic sites and buildings

9 throughout the City, in defending the

10 safety of the parks and park goers so

11 their picnics and families aren't

12 terrorized by ATVs gone wild in the

13 warm months.

14 Mostly what I offer is a

15 long time resident's view of the gem

16 this City is, coupled with the

17 sincere belief that the combination

18 of my journalism, social work and

19 legal skills make me uniquely able to

20 listen, digest, analyze and problem

21 solve.

22 I don't presume to know the

23 answers from the periphery. That

24 would be foolish and unproductive.

25 What is productive is to listen and

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 learn from those more experienced and
3 those directly impacted. Then, only
4 then, synchronize and distill that
5 information that's been gathered into
6 practical solutions within the
7 paradigm on the table.

8 I'm a practical woman.

9 Being able to make something work
10 with what you've got, to make a
11 dollar out of fifteen cents is
12 something I have done as a student
13 for many, many years and as a mother
14 for even more.

15 I hope you will give me the
16 opportunity to serve my City and
17 recommend me to Mayor Nutter for
18 appointment. Thank you for your time
19 and I will entertain any questions
20 you might have.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
22 you for your time and for your
23 comments. And as the last two
24 speakers, I want to thank you for
25 being here today. I want to thank

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 everybody for being here today and
3 for all of your testimony and
4 commitment. It's really just so
5 important to the City of
6 Philadelphia. We want to talk about
7 growing our City, getting people to
8 come visit Philadelphia, growing our
9 tax base and Parks, Recreation; it's
10 a no-brainer. This makes sense.

11 This is something that, you
12 know, we should all have a
13 significant concern about in terms of
14 the vitality and vibrancy of our City
15 and making sure that we do this. We
16 do it the right way, and that we move
17 forward based on the foundation
18 that's already been laid and move our
19 City forward in a significant way
20 with Parks and Recreation.

21 So again, I just really
22 want to thank everyone who came out
23 today and to let you know that we
24 look forward to finding a place.
25 Whether you are selected in terms of

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401

2 being recommended or not, because
3 there is a very limited number of
4 spots. We had over 80 people who
5 applied and there is a very limited
6 number of spaces that are actually
7 available.

8 So whether you are
9 recommended or nominated and your
10 name passed on to the Mayor or not,
11 we look forward to finding a way to
12 engaging each and every one of you
13 significantly. So I really want to
14 make that clear that whether you are
15 nominated through this process or
16 not, we really do want to have your
17 ideas and your input. And we will
18 make sure there is a way to reach out
19 to you, to contact you and get you
20 further engaged in some way, shape or
21 form.

22 So one way or another you
23 will be hearing from us. I am
24 certain of that. So I just want to
25 thank you for that. So any

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 additional comments, Councilwoman
3 Brown?

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I just
5 want to underscore that in bold print
6 with exclamation points. I have
7 taken a lot of notes about your
8 ideas. There are enormous resolution
9 opportunities as members of this
10 Council to broaden and deepen the
11 discussion on much that's come before
12 us. So know for sure in addition to
13 Councilwoman Bass' office, you will
14 hear from our office.

15 And we are serious about
16 wanting. In fact, we are desperate
17 for wanting your input. We are not
18 end all, be all. We are better where
19 we have the group think from citizens
20 who deeply care and authentically
21 care about making a contribution. So
22 thank you for that.

23 I know that Sonny Hill
24 would be thrilled to hear -- I shout
25 out to him. I actually didn't know

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 that the Sonny Hill League reached as
3 far as the Northeast. I actually
4 volunteered as a tutor for Sonny Hill
5 when I first came out of school
6 looking for a job many, many years
7 ago. And thank you as well, former
8 mother Powel Elementary School.
9 Thank you very much.

10 COUNCILMAN BASS:
11 Councilman Johnson?

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
13 you for being here. Thank you for
14 your testimony. Congratulations on
15 getting that JD.

16 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you.
17 Blood, sweat and tears.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
19 you so much. With that being said,
20 is there anyone else who would like
21 to testify in reference to Resolution
22 120401?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
25 And hearing no response, the City

1 5/22/12 STATED BILL NO. 120401
2 Council Committee on Parks,
3 Recreation and Cultural Affairs will
4 be recessed until the call of the
5 Chair. Thank you very much,
6 everyone.

7 Correction. This Committee
8 will be recessed until June 12, 2012
9 at 3 p.m.

10 TIME NOTED: 4:04 p.m.

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