

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, June 12, 2025
9:05 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

BILL: 250333

1 - - -

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
3 morning. This hearing is called to
4 order. This is the public hearing
5 of the Committee on Rules regarding
6 Bill No. 250333. Members and
7 guests, please take their seats and
8 the Clerk will now take roll.

9 THE CLERK: Chairmember
10 Bass.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
12 Present.

13 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
14 Squilla.

15 (No response.)

16 THE CLERK: Member O'Neill.

17 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL:
18 Present.

19 THE CLERK: Member Gilmore
20 Richardson.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
22 RICHARDSON: Present.

23 THE CLERK: Member
24 Gauthier.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

2 Present.

3 THE CLERK: Member Jones.

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: Member Thomas.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: (No
7 response.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: A
9 quorum of the committee is present
10 and the Clerk will now read the
11 title of the bill.

12 THE CLERK: Bill No.
13 250333, an Ordinance amending Title
14 14 Zoning Code of The Philadelphia
15 Code, Sections 14-409 entitled
16 "SP-CIV, Civic, Educational, and
17 Medical (Special Purpose)
18 District," and amending Title
19 14-602 entitled "Use Tables," by
20 allowing Religious Assembly uses in
21 certain Special Purpose districts,
22 all under certain terms and
23 conditions.

24 There are no other bills

1 under consideration today.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
3 you, Madam Clerk. And will you now
4 call the first panel we have to
5 testify on Bill No. 250333.

6 THE CLERK: Will David
7 Fecteau, City Planner Supervisor
8 for the Philadelphia City Planning
9 Commission. Please approach the
10 witness table.

11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
14 morning.

15 MR. FECTEAU: Good morning,
16 Chairmember Bass, members of the
17 Rules Committee. I'm David
18 Fecteau, Senior Legislative Planner
19 with the Legislative team at the
20 City Planning Commission. I'm here
21 to testify on Bill No. 250333,
22 introduced into City Council on
23 April 10, 2025, by Councilmember
24 Squilla.

1 Bill No. 250333 amends
2 Section 14-602, of The Philadelphia
3 Code, entitled "Use Tables" by
4 allowing religious assembly uses in
5 certain special purpose districts.
6 This bill will add religious
7 assembly as an allowed use in the
8 SP-CIV, (Special Purpose) Civic,
9 Medical, Educational-based zoning
10 district.

11 This use is currently only
12 allowed by-right in certain
13 commercial and light industrial
14 zoning districts. It requires a
15 special exception in residential
16 zoning districts where most
17 religious institutions are located.
18 The Commission notes that
19 prohibiting religious uses in the
20 district creates an inequitable
21 situation compared with other civic
22 uses such that have similar
23 impacts, such as schools,
24 libraries, museums and hospitals,

1 which are allowed in the SP-CIV.
2 The zoning district is not widely
3 mapped and is typically done so
4 only by request from a property
5 owner.

6 The Philadelphia City
7 Planning Commission considered Bill
8 No. 250333 at its public meeting on
9 April 17, 2025 and recommends this
10 bill for approval. I will be happy
11 to answer any questions at this
12 time.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
14 you very much for your testimony
15 today.

16 Are there any questions
17 from the panel?

18 Chair recognizes Councilman
19 O'Neill.

20 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Go
21 through in English what this
22 changes and just explain it to
23 somebody who just walked in and
24 doesn't know anything about zoning

1 because I feel like I am right now.

2 MR. FECTEAU: Absolutely,
3 Councilmember. And I apologize if
4 it was a little bit --

5 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: That's
6 okay. I'm just following. I
7 actually thought you were going to
8 get closed to it.

9 MR. FECTEAU: Okay. So
10 this is a zoning district that we
11 specifically designed during the
12 last administration, specifically
13 to accommodate civic activities,
14 schools, medical centers, any place
15 where people are gathering in a
16 public space. The last
17 administration did not want to
18 include churches, mosques,
19 synagogues, et cetera, in this
20 category.

21 We believe now that it's
22 inequitable not to do so. We had a
23 case where we recently wrote a
24 zoning bill for the 7th Council

1 District and there was a mosque
2 called the Al-Aqsa Islamic Society,
3 1500 block of Germantown Avenue who
4 wanted to expand their primary
5 educational school, and SP-CIV
6 would have been the perfect zoning
7 district for them. But
8 unfortunately, it would not have
9 allowed the mosque, right. There
10 was the primary reason why the
11 school was there. So we thought
12 that was a very strange situation.
13 It was not equitable, as I said.

14 And so, we would like to
15 put this forward. And we asked the
16 Councilman to introduce it, to
17 allow religious assembly where the
18 schools, medical centers,
19 et cetera, are allowed.

20 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Is
21 parking an issue in any of this?

22 MR. FACEAUT: So we did
23 change -- well, we did bring over,
24 let me say, the parking

1 requirements from other zoning
2 districts where religious assembly
3 is allowed. So this will carry the
4 same parking requirements. I've
5 got written down here one parking
6 space for every 10 seats or one
7 parking space for every 1000 square
8 feet, whichever is greater, and
9 require those parking requirements
10 just like churches, mosques,
11 synagogues, et cetera require in
12 other zoning districts.

13 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: And
14 aren't there some zoning districts
15 that allow churches, mosques and
16 don't really have any parking
17 requirement other than what the
18 residential zoning calls for, which
19 is often one parking spot?

20 MR. FACEAUT: Councilman,
21 I'd have to check that for you. I
22 don't have that information in
23 front of me.

24 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Okay.

1 That's my understanding. I know
2 that's still the case. But as
3 you're reviewing these kind of
4 things, you may want to look at it.
5 It was always assumed there was
6 going to be a big parking lot next
7 to a church, mosque. But if the
8 zoning doesn't require it, then
9 you've got something in a
10 residential district that while
11 everybody's in favor of it, it
12 still needs parking. And so, it'll
13 be helpful if you would look at
14 that. Thank you. Thanks for the
15 explanation.

16 MR. FACEAUT: Sure.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
18 you, Councilman.

19 Any additional questions?

20 Chair recognizes Councilmember
21 Kathy Gilmore Richardson -- no,
22 okay. Thank you.

23 Seeing no additional
24 questions from the panel, is there

1 anyone else here to testify on this
2 bill today?

3 THE CLERK: There are no
4 further names on our list.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
6 There are no final further
7 witnesses. I will ask if there is
8 anyone else here in chambers that
9 wishes to testify before the
10 committee today?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Seeing
13 none, we will now go into our
14 committee meeting.

15 Will the Clerk please call
16 the roll.

17 THE CLERK: Chair
18 Councilmember Bass.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
20 Present.

21 THE CLERK: Member
22 Gauthier.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
24 Present.

1 THE CLERK: Member O'Neill.

2 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL:

3 Present.

4 THE CLERK: Member Gilmore

5 Richardson.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

7 RICHARDSON: Present.

8 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair

9 Squilla.

10 (No response.)

11 THE CLERK: Member Thomas.

12 (No response.)

13 THE CLERK: Member Jones.

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

16 I now note for the record that a
17 quorum of the committee is present.

18 The Chair now recognizes

19 Councilmember Kathy Gilmore.

20 Richardson for a motion on the

21 amendment to Bill No. 250333.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Madam

24 Chair.

1 I move that Bill No. 250333
2 be amended -- one moment, Madam
3 Chair.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
5 We're going to do that again. I
6 want to recognize that a quorum of
7 the committee is present.

8 Chair now recognizes
9 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson
10 for a motion on Bill No. 250333.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
12 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Madam
13 Chair.

14 I move that Bill No. 250333
15 be reported from this committee
16 with a favorable recommendation and
17 further move that the rules of
18 Council be suspended as to permit
19 first reading of this bill at the
20 next session of Council.

21 (Duly seconded.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It has
23 been moved and properly seconded
24 that Bill No. 250333 be reported

1 from this committee with a
2 favorable recommendation and
3 further move that the rules of
4 Council be suspended to prevent
5 first reading of this bill at the
6 next session of Council.

7 All those in favor of this
8 motion will signify by saying aye.

9 (Aye.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is
11 there anyone opposed?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
14 ayes have it and the motion
15 carries.

16 And if there are no
17 additional remarks from the
18 committee or our guests, this
19 concludes the business of the
20 Committee on Rules today. Thank
21 you all very much for your
22 attendance. And Chair recognizes
23 Councilmember Isaiah Thomas in
24 attendance. Thank you very much.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
2 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Madam
3 Chair.
4 (Committee on Rules
5 concluded at 9:20 a.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Taneha Carroll", is written over a horizontal line.

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this
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of the same by any means, unless under the
direct control and/or supervision of the
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