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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION

4

AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

5

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, March 19, 2009
1:15 p.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

12

COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE

13

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

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COUNCILWOMAN MARIA QUINONES-SANCHEZ

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COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

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afternoon, everyone. We are going to

4

reconvene from the first round that was

5

started yesterday on Resolution No.

6

090057. Yesterday we had 52 candidates

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slated to speak. Of that, 39 offered

8

testimony.

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I will say to you that the

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breadth and depth of the talent and the

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ideas that came from those candidates was

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awesome. At no point were we bored at

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all with what citizens have to bring and

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share as we move towards the formation of

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this new Commission. We were extremely

16

encouraged. Philadelphians really do

17

care about our Park and Recreation

18

system. It was absolutely inspiring.

19

So today we're going to

20

continue. Our format has been four

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hours, 50 candidates each. How about

22

that? So today is the second lap of that

23

250 candidates.

24

So let me please introduce to

25

some and present to others my colleagues

1 3/19/09 - PARKS - RES. 090057
2 on the Committee for Arts, Parks and
3 Recreation. Councilman Curtis Jones to
4 my immediate right is the Vice-Chair of
5 our Committee, and Councilwoman Maria
6 Quinones-Sanchez, also a member of our
7 Committee.

8 As with any large endeavor of
9 this scale, we need some ground rules,
10 and it's important that you know what
11 they are.

12 We will be calling you up in
13 groups of three. As stated in the e-mail
14 that you all received, remarks should be
15 no longer than two to three minutes. And
16 I'm a former educator, and there's a
17 tenet that says it takes individuals
18 seven times to hear something before they
19 really get it. So let me repeat. All
20 remarks should be no longer than two to
21 three minutes.

22 Council staff will be
23 collecting your written testimony, and we
24 encourage you to share that with us -- if
25 you do not have it, it would be helpful

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2 to us if we do get it -- and any other
3 documents you wish to share with members
4 of the Committee.

5 As I indicated, we have a lot
6 of people, approximately 50, and we want
7 to give everyone a fair opportunity and
8 the same amount of time to offer your
9 opportunity.

10 One different practice here is,
11 we will limit our questions for clarity
12 only. Unlike normal Council hearings
13 where there is a lot of dialogue and
14 debate back and forth, we'll be asking
15 questions purely in those instances where
16 we need clarity.

17 I would be remiss also not to
18 acknowledge my Chief of Staff, David
19 Forde, along with Hal Thickhander and
20 Sharon Ortiz, who collected all of the
21 initial applications and has done all the
22 work to get us to this point today. This
23 does not happen as a solo act. They
24 worked very closely together in making
25 sure that we were adequately prepared

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2 today.

3 So with that, I will ask my
4 colleague, Councilman Curtis Jones, to
5 help us to be the time police, and we're
6 going to proceed with our first six. The
7 first three will sit at the witness table
8 and the other three will be prepared to
9 step in soon after they are done.

10 So welcome. Please allow me to
11 call up Hugh Gallagher, Tatiana Garcia,
12 Mario Gentile, can take the seats at the
13 witness table. They are to be followed
14 by Penelope Giles, Stephen Gleason, Avi
15 Golen.

16 (Witnesses approached witness
17 table.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Kenneth
19 Goldberg, Nancy Goldenberg, Debra
20 Goldstein, you're welcome to come and
21 take a seat. Move up closer, because I
22 see only two people here. We're going to
23 fill up this witness table. So Kenneth
24 Goldberg, Nancy Goldenberg, Debra
25 Goldstein. If you can move forward, one

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2 of the three of you can take a seat at
3 the witness table and the other three can
4 sit in the black chairs up on this side
5 of the gate.

6 (Witnesses approached witness
7 table.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We want to
9 make sure we capture everybody's
10 comments, so you must speak into the mike
11 and you must always state your full name
12 for the record so that our recorder is
13 capturing all that you have to say.

14 Please state your full name for
15 the record.

16 MS. GARCIA-GRANADOS: It's
17 Tatiana Garcia-Granados.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And you
19 can proceed with your testimony.

20 MS. GARCIA-GRANADOS: Hello.
21 My name is Tatiana Garcia-Granados. I'm
22 a resident of the Strawberry Mansion
23 neighborhood in North Philadelphia and
24 I'm honored to be here today.

25 Strawberry Mansion is a

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2 community blessed to have a beautiful
3 thousand-acre section of Fairmount Park
4 in its background. My husband, Haile,
5 and I founded a non-profit organization
6 called East Park Revitalization Alliance
7 in 2003 with the goal of community
8 revitalization through environmental
9 improvements and health promotion.

10 Since then, we have started
11 after-school and summer programs that
12 have served over 270 kids, launched
13 summer job training programs for teens,
14 planted 680 trees and cleaned and greened
15 acres and acres of vacant land in the
16 neighborhood.

17 I am excited to serve on the
18 Parks and Recreation Commission and
19 believe that I bring a unique perspective
20 to the Commission. For the past five
21 years, I have designed, operated and
22 fundraised for innovative programming
23 related to health and the environment.
24 Under my leadership, EPRA has partnered
25 with both the Department of Recreation

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2 and Fairmount Park to create youth
3 programming that is focused on using Park
4 assets to promote health and the
5 environment. Our Healthy Choices
6 after-school program and summer camp is
7 operated in partnership with the Mander
8 Recreation Center and seeks to engage
9 neighborhood children in activities that
10 promote health, like healthy cooking
11 classes, hikes in Fairmount Park and
12 tennis lessons. We also partnered with
13 the Department of Recreation, Fairmount
14 Park and the Pennsylvania Horticultural
15 Society to launch the Youth Environmental
16 Stewardship program, an environmental job
17 training program for teens. We also
18 worked with Fairmount Park to launch
19 Discover Fairmount Park in YOUR
20 Neighborhood, an environmental education
21 program that seeks to introduce families
22 to the many recreational, cultural and
23 natural resources in their park.

24 Our programs have been
25 recognized for their innovation and

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2 effectiveness. Discover Fairmount Park
3 in YOUR Neighborhood won the Excellence
4 in Environmental Education Award from the
5 Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks
6 Society, and the Healthy Choices program
7 was recognized by the City's Department
8 of Public Health for having the best
9 youth environmental health program.

10 As a member of the Parks and
11 Recreation Commission, I would also draw
12 on my business experience and education
13 from the Wharton School's MBA program.
14 My first priority as a member of the
15 Parks and Recreation Commission would be
16 to help existing after-school and summer
17 programs tap into the Pennsylvania
18 Department of Public Welfare subsidy for
19 licensed childcare facilities. This
20 would provide an additional reliable
21 funding stream for programs like Healthy
22 Choices that would allow the Parks and
23 Recreation Department to better serve
24 Philadelphia's youth and families without
25 increasing the economic burden to the

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2 City.

3 The success of a merged Parks
4 and Recreation Department depends on its
5 ability to engage communities and
6 constituencies and to develop
7 partnerships that will lessen the burdens
8 on government. I have been successful in
9 engaging new constituencies to the Park,
10 building a new group of potential Park
11 stewards. I am a founder of the Young
12 Friends of the Pennsylvania Horticultural
13 Society, a group that seeks to involve
14 young adults in the great community
15 greening work done by PHS. I am also
16 very proud of the environmental education
17 and job training programs we have run for
18 youth in my neighborhood, giving them the
19 skills and passion to carry out the
20 important work of caring for our
21 environment.

22 My daughter, Cecilia, was born
23 four months ago. Her birth has really
24 motivated me to work even harder to make
25 our neighborhood and our city a place

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2 where she can grow up and thrive.

3 Thank you for your time and
4 consideration for this important
5 commission.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
7 We'll hear from all three testifiers and
8 then we'll open it up to questions.

9 Please, sir.

10 MR. GENTILE: Mario Gentile.
11 Good afternoon. To start, I'd like to
12 briefly introduce myself. I'm Mario
13 Gentile. I reside in the Fairmount area
14 here in Philadelphia. Professionally I
15 am a licensed architect, small business
16 owner and Professor of Architecture at
17 Temple University. In addition to
18 holding memberships in various
19 professional organizations, I have been
20 chosen to serve on committees within
21 these groups.

22 At the community level, I help
23 administrate a non-for-profit amateur
24 adult soccer league in the City and also
25 participate as one of its thousand-plus

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2 members. Personally, my interests are in
3 gardening and enjoying Fairmount Park
4 with my wife and young son.

5 My nomination to the Committee
6 will prove beneficial on multiple levels.
7 I will begin to explain from which two
8 perspectives I will primarily use, if
9 selected. Simply understanding and
10 respecting others' opinions and being
11 able to guide these into positive
12 outcomes is something I've learned from
13 teaching at the university level. It is
14 important to realize that a good product
15 comes from good input. As a Committee
16 member, my role and responsibilities are
17 something that can enrich a great many
18 others' lives, and I look forward to
19 being able to fulfill this promising
20 future.

21 From the professional
22 perspective as an architect and having
23 been involved with many projects at
24 different scales, Fairmount Park has the
25 underlying potential to be many things to

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2 many people. It is grander in scale than
3 that of an Olmstead type park system like
4 New York's Central Park or Boston's
5 Emerald Necklace. These parks were
6 designed while Fairmount's was a
7 collection of estates. This result
8 offers interesting connections with the
9 layering of different programs and paths
10 that have greater potential integrating
11 with different facilities within the
12 Park. Within these current scenarios,
13 there is always opportunity available for
14 improvement. What becomes relevant
15 during these tough economic times is the
16 opportunity for development of athletic
17 fields, structures and maintenance
18 through volunteer and corporate
19 partnerships that can be explored as the
20 development of the Park is assessed. The
21 adoption, stewardship or leasing of Park
22 facilities by private organizations,
23 whether non-profit or for-profit
24 ventures, for public use can greatly
25 enhance the amenities of the Park and act

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2 as a possible source of revenue.

3 Advising forward-thinking ideas from many
4 levels of government and the private
5 sector will be of importance as a
6 responsibility of the Commission member.
7 These ideas also need to maintain the
8 reflection of the past within the
9 restoration of historic facilities and
10 management of the ecological standards.
11 Through my training, being able to see
12 these visions as proposed will allow me
13 the insight to guide and aid in the
14 development for the benefit of the
15 greater public.

16 On a personal level, as a
17 member of the community and user of the
18 Park system, I realize the personal
19 attachment that people have to the Park
20 and can empathize with them about not
21 wanting to lose its charm when it comes
22 to change. However, it is important to
23 understand the effect of decisions to be
24 made while serving on the Committee and
25 always keep a greater understanding of

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2 how these outcomes affect the public. In
3 this capacity, I come to this role as a
4 citizen who, like others, both benefit
5 and wonder of the positive changes to be
6 made.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
9 for your testimony.

10 Good afternoon.

11 MS. SZWAJKOWSKI: Good
12 afternoon. My name is Kristin
13 Szwajkowski and I am testifying on behalf
14 of Penelope Giles.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Testifying
16 on behalf of?

17 MS. SZWAJKOWSKI: Penelope
18 Giles.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

20 MS. SZWAJKOWSKI: Good
21 afternoon, members of City Council. My
22 name is Penelope Jordan Giles and I am
23 the Founder and Executive Director of the
24 Francisville Neighborhood Development
25 Corporation. Unfortunately, I am unable

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2 to attend the hearings in person and have
3 requested that Kristin Szwajkowski, Board
4 Chair of the Francisville Neighborhood
5 Development Corporation, deliver my
6 statement regarding my application today.

7 First, thank you for this
8 opportunity to submit testimony in
9 support of my application to serve on the
10 new Parks and Recreation Commission. I
11 submit my testimony in my capacity as a
12 resident of the earth and as a lifelong
13 resident of this city.

14 If I had a nickel for every
15 time my heart cries in silence when I
16 walk or drive through my neighborhood and
17 the City seeing the trash that lines our
18 sidewalks and streets like the grass,
19 flowers and trees did so many forgotten
20 years ago, I would be rich enough to do
21 something about it. The same holds true
22 for the sad state of so many of our
23 recreation facilities which serve the
24 citizens of our city.

25 I wish to serve on the

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2 Commission to do my part to secure our
3 future on this planet for our children's
4 children. What we can do here in
5 Philadelphia to preserve open space may
6 be a small thing in a larger scope of the
7 global picture, but it is the way back -
8 city by city, town by town, nation by
9 nation. The one thing we all have in
10 common is residence on planet earth.

11 I have been striving tirelessly
12 in my own community to build consensus
13 among diverse groups of people around a
14 common vision. My community has
15 determined that our physical environment
16 is one of the most precious assets we
17 have and that our recreation center is
18 the heart of our neighborhood. Our city
19 has acres of vacant land and underused
20 parkland that could be put to better use.
21 I look on the current economic situation
22 as an opportunity to think out of the box
23 and to seek short- and long-term
24 solutions, including exploring new
25 sustainable funding sources, while

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2 reducing our carbon footprint. We should
3 be thinking not just about how to
4 preserve green space and improve our
5 recreation centers, but also how they can
6 work for us by providing job training,
7 employment and urban farming
8 opportunities. We may not be able to
9 implement new ideas in the current
10 economy, but we should be laying the
11 groundwork now for future improvements to
12 the Park and Recreation system.

13 The health, both the mental and
14 physical well-being, of our citizens is
15 critical. All residents should have
16 access to well-maintained green space and
17 safe recreational amenities. If we begin
18 to take better care of our piece of the
19 planet, we will take better care of our
20 citizens, and Philadelphia will be on the
21 road to becoming the city we all know it
22 can be.

23 I applaud the efforts and
24 leadership of our Mayor and all of you
25 working to move this city finally in the

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2 right direction. I hope that I may be a
3 part of the solution by serving the City
4 and its residents.

5 In conclusion, while I am a
6 passionate advocate for the environment,
7 I am also a conscientious student of life
8 and will serve with commitment, common
9 sense and a collaborative spirit for the
10 public good.

11 Thank you for your time this
12 afternoon. I will be submitting letters
13 of recommendation in support of my
14 application separately. Ms. Szwajkowski
15 will be happy to answer any questions you
16 may have regarding my application.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
19 you all for your testimony, and
20 Councilman Curtis Jones has some
21 questions.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: First of
23 all, the second day of these hearings
24 like the first day have been insightful.
25 I understand the limitation of your

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2 testimony based on the fact that we want
3 you to do it in three minutes. You can't
4 reshape the world in that time. But I
5 would be interested in -- a couple of
6 things jumped out at me about land use in
7 the Park, alternative land use that might
8 generate a revenue, and I would be
9 interested -- I heard farming in one, but
10 no specifics on some. But what would
11 some of those uses look like?

12 MR. GENTILE: Just basically
13 allowing either for-profit entities that
14 have a corporate sponsorship for
15 different facilities, whether it's
16 athletic fields or some sort of
17 amenities, like cafes. There are many
18 willing businesses and business ventures
19 that actually will jump at the
20 opportunity to actually -- if the City
21 was to sort of do some sort of lease for
22 a dollar type of situation where they're
23 in control, a for-profit entity can come
24 in, sponsor, give X amount of dollars to
25 support their cause and, in turn, allow

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2 the public to use that space for
3 advertising dollars, profits generated
4 from that in return for renting or
5 leasing certain spaces or facilities.

6 MS. GARCIA-GRANADOS: I think a
7 huge opportunity is to continue the --
8 or, I guess, to engage people in
9 communities into the Park by having more
10 events. I think a good example of that
11 were the concerts last summer. That
12 really drew people -- the concerts that
13 can replace the Mann -- I mean, the Dell
14 concerts neighborhood, and with -- if
15 that became more of, I guess, a
16 structured thing and a planned event, we
17 could have a lot of economic development
18 kind of surrounding it, and people who
19 are -- I mean, whether the parking or the
20 revenues from vendors or other things,
21 and you have the benefit of bringing in
22 revenue, but in addition, bringing in
23 people into the Park so that they see the
24 real value that we have in our parks.

25 MS. SZWAJKOWSKI: I'll speak

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2 about what we're doing in Francisville.

3 We are using vacant land, which could
4 be -- you could use the same model for
5 parkland, in which we are creating job
6 training opportunities and employment
7 opportunities by creating an urban farm.

8 If you were to do that with the parks,
9 you could -- the Park could rent out land
10 either to non-profit groups or for-profit
11 groups, provide training opportunities in
12 green jobs, and you'd be better utilizing
13 the land and also providing not just job
14 training, but entrepreneurship
15 opportunities and produce potentially for
16 underserved neighborhoods like
17 Francisville, where we don't have access
18 to fresh food.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
20 for your answers. There's no A answer
21 or -- there's no grade on it, but I
22 wanted to hear the range at which we're
23 talking about possible uses. I mean,
24 remember, we had before us in one extreme
25 the Fox Chase Cancer Center and people

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2 looking at that. I've had people come to
3 us with proposals to do a road race
4 through the Park.

5 And so I wanted to kind of
6 get -- and this is open to anyone's
7 interpretation of what that answer should
8 be, but, I mean, as a body, as a Council,
9 we need to at least get a sense of where
10 the envelope begins and ends.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm
12 pleased to introduce to some and present
13 to others my partner who worked with me
14 for the last nine years in really getting
15 us to this point. He's a former member
16 of the former Fairmount Park Commission
17 and, therefore, brought a very unique,
18 realistic, hands-on perspective as we
19 went down this road, and that would be
20 Councilman Darrell Clarke, who has joined
21 us, and he is a member of this Committee.

22 Thank you, Darrell.

23 I do have one question. I was
24 struck by your link, Ms. Garcia-Granados,
25 your link between parks and licensed

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2 childcare facilities. So just flush that
3 out briefly.

4 MS. GARCIA-GRANADOS: Well,
5 we've been operating an after-school and
6 summer program at the Mander Recreation
7 Center since 2005 and we've really been
8 funding it -- I mean, it's in partnership
9 with the Rec Department, so it's some
10 City funding and then we've been going to
11 foundations to fund the rest of it. And
12 one of the kind of trials that we've had
13 is to have our facility licensed as a
14 childcare facility so that we could tap
15 into this Pennsylvania Department of
16 Public Welfare subsidy. There are a lot
17 of roadblocks, because it's City
18 property. There are just a whole series
19 of roadblocks, and one of them -- I mean,
20 the easiest one probably is zoning. All
21 of the recreation centers are zoned
22 recreational, and to be licensed, you
23 need to be zoned commercial.

24 So, I mean, that's the first
25 thing, the first hurdle, but there's a

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2 few other hurdles that it would be
3 wonderful to kind of address
4 systematically so that other facilities
5 could also be tapping into this funding.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right.
7 Just as a footnote and a sidebar, a lot
8 of my work that I've done here has been
9 around childcare. The first bill that I
10 got passed in 2000 was to change the
11 number of children we could take care of
12 in a family childcare setting from four
13 to six and the hurdles I had to conquer
14 to make that happen.

15 So I'd like to have my staff
16 have a sidebar with you, because we have
17 some other childcare initiatives in the
18 pipeline and maybe we can be helpful with
19 that specifically.

20 MS. GARCIA-GRANADOS: That
21 would be wonderful.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So please
23 make sure that you see David Forde on my
24 staff.

25 MS. GARCIA-GRANADOS: All

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2 and then the last three names I called,
3 you now move to the black chairs so that
4 you'll be next to come to the witness
5 table. Do you follow me? No.

6 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Play
7 musical chairs. Just swap.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Repeat the
9 names that are supposed to be at the
10 mike.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Kenneth
12 Goldberg, Nancy Goldenberg, Debra
13 Goldstein.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Should be at
15 the mike.

16 MR. GLEASON: Excuse me. My
17 name is Stephen Gleason and I think I was
18 in the second set of three names.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Gleason.
20 I'm looking at Francine Griesing. Maybe
21 I need to get my eyes checked. Stephen
22 Gleason. Please forgive me.

23 MR. GLEASON: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So Stephen
25 Gleason, Avi Golen, Kenneth Goldberg,

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2 Nancy Goldenberg, Debra Goldstein, right?

3 What's your name, sir?

4 MR. GOLEN: Avi Golen.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So you

6 should actually be seated and then --

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: At the mike?

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, at

9 the mike.

10 Welcome. Thank you very much.

11 State your name for the record and then

12 offer your testimony.

13 MR. GOLEN: My name is Avi

14 Golen. I'm a resident of Mount Airy of

15 Philadelphia, and one of the goals of

16 this Commission will be to maintain our

17 current green space and recreational

18 facilities, as well as find ways to

19 expand and improve them. This is a

20 tremendous challenge in the face of our

21 current economic conditions. It will

22 require new and creative funding

23 mechanisms so these assets can be

24 sustainable.

25 We should explore the

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2 opportunities of public-private
3 partnerships and the marketability of
4 these partnerships in the City. We can
5 explore long-term ideas like urban
6 farming, which provides for outdoor
7 recreation and education, while at the
8 same time producing locally grown,
9 affordable food that will be good for our
10 residents.

11 We need to continue the effort
12 to encourage volunteerism, which has
13 historically been a critical component of
14 the well-being of our parks and
15 recreational facilities. We also need to
16 develop new opportunities for community
17 involvement.

18 The significance of our Parks
19 and Recreation facilities has a
20 tremendous cultural and economic impact
21 on our city. We need them to keep our
22 residents active and healthy, which will
23 in turn reduce the costs associated with
24 poor health in children and adults in our
25 communities. We can do this by making

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2 sure access to green space can be enjoyed
3 by all areas of the City.

4 Our parks and recreational
5 facilities need to be viewed as assets
6 that will help attract and retain
7 talented professionals and corporations
8 who are weighing maybe their options on
9 which city to move in or which city to
10 live in. The fact that we have one of
11 the largest urban parks can create a
12 lifestyle that allows for one to escape
13 the fast pace of the City, even if it's
14 just for an hour, to run, hike, bike or
15 just relax. This is a marketable aspect
16 that can be made more saleable by
17 preserving and improving these assets.

18 I believe my experience listed
19 in my application and resume will add
20 value to this Commission.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you
23 have testimony to share with us that
24 you're going to leave?

25 MR. GOLEN: Yeah.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Oh,

3 terrific. Okay.

4 MR. GOLEN: No problem.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

6 Please, sir.

7 MR. GLEASON: Good afternoon.

8 My name is Stephen Gleason. I'm a
9 resident of Rosemont, Pennsylvania, a
10 principal in Amerimar Enterprises, a
11 Rittenhouse Square-based real estate
12 investment and development company. I'm
13 the father of three young boys, a
14 lifelong resident of Philadelphia and
15 also an avid biker, runner and former
16 rower. I truly appreciate the
17 opportunity to appear regarding this
18 exciting opportunity for the City of
19 Philadelphia.

20 As everyone here knows,
21 Philadelphia has an abundance of riches
22 when it comes to park space and
23 recreation areas. Comprising over 10,600
24 acres and 12 percent of the land area of
25 the City, this system has the potential

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2 to be world class. However, the
3 potential has been squandered over the
4 years. We have a responsibility to those
5 who came before us and to those who will
6 follow to restore our Park and Recreation
7 assets to their full potential.

8 The creation of this commission
9 creates a chance for a fresh start. Even
10 in these difficult economic times when
11 our region's resources are being
12 stretched as never before, we have a
13 chance to ensure that our Parks and
14 Recreation areas achieve their
15 world-class potential. It is an
16 opportunity to fix up, to clean up, to
17 secure and to improve our network. It
18 will take fresh ideas, cooperation
19 between different stakeholders and, yes,
20 money.

21 The first step is to inventory
22 what we have, see how it is being used
23 and create a vision for the future.
24 GreenPlan Philadelphia is a great start,
25 but its work cannot be completed soon

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2 enough.

3 Another vital ingredient will
4 be partnerships between government,
5 community groups, corporate neighbors and
6 institutions. Each of these stakeholders
7 must give input into the vision, but they
8 also must step up when it comes time to
9 implement the vision. This will include
10 donations of ideas, time and money.

11 Finally, realizing the
12 potential of our parks must involve
13 regional cooperation. Our neighboring
14 suburban counties and municipalities
15 should have both an opportunity and a
16 responsibility to improve our parks.
17 Just as the Art Museum, the Kimmel Center
18 and the Sports Complex are regional
19 assets, so should our Parks and
20 Recreation areas. This will greatly
21 expand both the pool of users and the
22 pool of resources for our parks.

23 I hope to revolutionize how we
24 utilize our network of Parks and
25 Recreation areas. A stroll past the Art

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2 Museum and along either River Drive gives
3 a taste of the vast potential. It is our
4 responsibility to realize this potential
5 in every corner of the City so that our
6 Parks and Recreation areas are used by as
7 many people as possible to promote
8 healthy and active lifestyles for all.
9 Our goal should be nothing less than to
10 make our Parks and Recreation areas world
11 class and befitting of our great city.

12 Thanks very much.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
14 for your testimony.

15 Let me say that it was November
16 '07 when Councilman Clarke and I went to
17 then see mayoral candidate Michael Nutter
18 to let him know that we were ready to
19 move our bill. We finally secured nine
20 notes. At that time, Mayor Nutter -- we
21 were predicting. We already looked into
22 the crystal ball -- asked us if we would
23 push the pause button, because he really
24 wanted an opportunity to weigh in. And
25 he gave his word that he would weigh in

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2 and figure out a way to make this vision
3 that Councilman Clarke and I had real.
4 He gave his word and he kept his word,
5 became Mayor.

6 We were able to take it to the
7 ballot, and now today we are moving
8 towards the formation of this commission.
9 So I really want to publicly thank our
10 Mayor Nutter and for coming up.

11 (Applause.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
13 seize the moment, Mr. Mayor.

14 MAYOR NUTTER: Madam Chair,
15 thank you.

16 Oh, she's going to give me a
17 chair. The Chair gave up her chair.

18 Madam Chair and Members Jones,
19 Quinones-Sanchez and Clarke, I happened
20 to be at something across the hall, but
21 I'm understanding this is the second of
22 four days, 250-some-odd folks interested
23 in our Parks and Recreation combined
24 system, and I just think that this is the
25 bright and shining example of what

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2 democracy and citizenship and
3 participation is all about.

4 I just really wanted to come in
5 and say thank you. This is so exciting.
6 And I want to commend the members for,
7 again, their really hard work, paying
8 attention, having this kind of process.

9 This is brand new. It's never
10 happened before. I don't know that
11 anyone has ever truly met a potential
12 candidate for the Park Commission, at
13 least with the old process. So you're
14 really doing a great thing, and I wish
15 everyone well. I'll see the applicants
16 in a different time.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

18 MAYOR NUTTER: With the
19 materials. But Council is doing a great
20 thing here. I just wanted to stop by.

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
24 Mr. Mayor.

25 Please proceed with your

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2 testimony. Give your name for the
3 record.

4 MS. GOLDENBERG: Sure. Good
5 afternoon and thank you for the privilege
6 to testify on behalf of my candidacy to
7 the City's new Commission on Parks and
8 Recreation. My name is Nancy Goldenberg
9 and for over 25 years, I have clearly
10 demonstrated my commitment, both
11 personally and professionally, to Park
12 and Recreation issues in Philadelphia.
13 Allow me to highlight what I believe are
14 the most relevant.

15 Twice in my professional career
16 I worked for Fairmount Park, first
17 producing a Master Plan for the River
18 Drives in 1990 and more recently serving
19 as the first Director of the Natural
20 Lands Restoration and Environmental
21 Education program, a \$26 million
22 initiative supported by the William Penn
23 Foundation to preserve and protect the
24 natural areas of Fairmount Park.

25 In my current position as

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2 Vice-President of Planning at the Center
3 City District, I frequently work with the
4 Fairmount Park Commission and Recreation
5 Department on projects that range from
6 renovating highly visible parks such as
7 Aviator Park and Sister Cities Park on
8 the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, to
9 maintaining neighborhood playgrounds and
10 annually inventorying and planting street
11 trees. I've raised millions of dollars
12 for these projects and have managed their
13 successful implementation. I've been an
14 early proponent of measuring the economic
15 value and social benefits of our city's
16 open space and, to that end, have served
17 on several professional panels with
18 national experts sponsored by the Trust
19 for Public Land and the Urban Land
20 Institute to help devise common
21 measurement standards and guidelines for
22 cities across the country.

23 As a volunteer, I'm a past
24 member of the Fairmount Park Advisory
25 Council and a past Board member of the

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2 Philadelphia Parks Alliance. I currently
3 serve as the head of the Friends of
4 Carpenter's Woods. I am the founder of
5 the Philadelphia Outward Bound program,
6 which is headquartered in Fairmount Park
7 and has for the last 17 years actively
8 and successfully used our parks,
9 recreational and cultural resources as
10 fundamental tools for teaching leadership
11 skills to Philadelphia's youth. Outward
12 Bound underscores the principle of
13 service, and I am most proud of the fact
14 that over 12,000 of our students have
15 devoted and continue to devote thousands
16 of hours to help maintain the Park.

17 Personally as an athlete, I
18 regularly use Fairmount Park as a runner
19 and hiker. I have had the good fortune
20 to travel to many of the world's
21 extraordinary Parks and Recreation
22 facilities, and I recognize that
23 Philadelphia can and it must learn from
24 other cities how to develop, manage and
25 sustain more innovative and compelling

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2 parks and playgrounds for both child play
3 and as community gathering spaces.

4 What I hope is readily apparent
5 from my testimony is that I have an
6 insatiable desire to give more back to my
7 city, to use my talents and passion to
8 improve Philadelphia for future
9 generations. I can think of no more
10 appropriate way to do this than by
11 serving on the Commission on Parks and
12 Recreation, and for that I seek your
13 favorable recommendation.

14 I have included in my packet to
15 you letters of recommendation from my
16 boss, Paul Levy; from a former boss or
17 former -- I guess he was never my boss,
18 Pete Hoskins, who actually left the Park
19 when I came, but he did hire me to do the
20 Master Plan for the River Drives, and
21 from Janet Haas of the William Penn
22 Foundation, with whom I had the honor of
23 working with when I was at the Park
24 Natural Lands program.

25 Thank you very much.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
3 welcome. Thank you for your testimony.
4 Councilman Curtis Jones.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
6 all for your testimony, but Ms.
7 Goldenberg, we won't hold against you
8 Paul Levy recommending you at all.

9 My question -- and it's open to
10 everybody, and I'm going to say, whatever
11 I ask one panel, feel free of the other
12 panels to respond to.

13 But you mentioned -- and I
14 think I know the answer, but I want you
15 to say it for the record. How do you
16 give economic value to social benefits of
17 the Park? And I've read it before, but
18 for the record, could you say what that
19 means.

20 MS. GOLDENBERG: There are many
21 ways that you can measure the value of a
22 park. Some of those are purely economic
23 property values, what you save from
24 mitigating air pollution, things like
25 that. But there are also a lot of social

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2 benefits derived. Health, for example,
3 just the value of being able to walk into
4 the Park and release your stress and
5 tension for the day.

6 There are a lot of family
7 reunions and block parties and many
8 things that happen in the Park that bring
9 people together in social events that
10 wouldn't ordinarily happen, and there are
11 ways that you can actually put a dollar
12 figure on this.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just
14 wanted people listening at home that may
15 not be a practitioner of this concept to
16 understand what you meant, that if you
17 walk in the Park and you are healthier
18 because of it, you can reduce your cost
19 of medical care. So I just wanted people
20 to kind of get a sense of that.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Anyone
23 else like to comment? Please.

24 MR. GLEASON: If it's all
25 right, I'd like to respond to Councilman

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2 Jones' earlier question about an example
3 for a private-public partnership. The
4 best one that I can think of is the
5 boathouse that was constructed along
6 River Drive for the use of the St. Joe's
7 Prep and St. Joe's University crews. I
8 was involved as an alumni of St. Joe's
9 Prep and the fundraising for that
10 facility, and my understanding is the
11 land was donated. The schools put up the
12 money to construct the boathouses, but
13 there was a condition attached to that,
14 which was that that facility would also
15 be used as the home for a facility to
16 teach economically and other disabled
17 children to row. So we got a beautiful
18 new boathouse. The schools get to use
19 it, but the City and its residents also
20 benefited from this new program, and
21 there are thousands of people rowing now
22 out of that location that never would
23 have had the opportunity to do so. And
24 I'd like to see that replicated in other
25 sports and in other parts of the park and

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2 recreation centers.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

5 Anyone else?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
8 you all for your testimony.

9 So we have Debra Goldstein,
10 John -- please pronounce your last name
11 for me.

12 MR. GOUGH: Gough.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Gough.

14 Okay. Jon, with J-O-N, Gray, Francine
15 Griesing, Michael Grasso, Jeffrey
16 Hackett, Victoria Halliday.

17 Your name, sir?

18 MR. GRAY: Jon Gray.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So the
20 next three people, you're welcome to --
21 Jon Gray, you're welcome to sit at the
22 witness table. Francine Griesing,
23 Michael Grasso, Jeffrey Hackett, Victoria
24 Halliday. Thank you very much.

25 Councilman Clarke.

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2 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair.

4 Madam Chair, briefly I just
5 wanted to make the statement similar to
6 what I made yesterday since we have a new
7 group here.

8 First, I want to commend you on
9 your leadership, not only in being the
10 co-sponsor of the ordinance that created
11 the Department of Parks and Recreation,
12 and working with you has been a pleasure.
13 That's an understatement.

14 I just want to say to the
15 members, this is the second day of this
16 process, and we had a sense of the level
17 of applicants when we reviewed the
18 initial 250 or whatever it was with
19 respect to your applications, but as we
20 continue this process and into day two,
21 it is clear that we have some very, very
22 extremely qualified applicants who are
23 committed, who clearly love not only the
24 parks but the City. That is going to
25 make it extremely difficult to figure out

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2 a way to nominate 25 people out of this
3 250. And as I said yesterday, frankly
4 speaking, I have no idea how we're going
5 to do this, but we'll figure out a way.

6 But, unfortunately, a lot of
7 individuals obviously will not be
8 nominated, but, one, I in no way want you
9 to think that -- and that's not to
10 suggest that you guys were called up.
11 I'm not talking about you. I don't want
12 you to get nervous, Why did he bring that
13 up now?

14 That in no way that you were
15 essentially rejected. It's just simply a
16 matter of numbers. In retrospect,
17 Councilwoman Brown and I were thinking
18 about when we did the legislation, we
19 probably should have provided more
20 opportunities, because there are
21 basically, as it relates to the public at
22 large, only going to be nine people, and
23 even if we expanded it to 20, it still
24 would not have been enough slots.

25 So the reality is that we will

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2 be introducing an initiative probably in
3 the next couple of weeks -- I think we're
4 going to wait until we're finished this
5 process -- of a way and some sort of a
6 format or an entity that will allow
7 people, particularly you that have shown
8 an interest in this very important
9 initiative, to be involved outside of the
10 Commission once it's selected, because
11 what we don't want to do is waste this
12 talent not having a vehicle for you all
13 to be involved. And it will be a
14 meaningful position. As I said
15 yesterday, there were some concerns early
16 on that this newly formed commission was
17 going to be, quote/unquote, an advisory
18 who really had no ability to influence
19 policy. Frankly speaking, that's going
20 to be anything but the truth. You will
21 be deeply engaged, and, frankly speaking,
22 you're going to be getting calls from
23 members of Council about what do you
24 think about disposition and acquisition.
25 So we expect that whoever is selected,

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2 and even those that aren't, to be
3 involved in a meaningful way about park
4 policy, about recreation policy and about
5 policy in general as it relates to our
6 jewels in the City of Philadelphia.

7 And one last thing, I must say
8 that we're going to be suggesting in a
9 very meaningful way that you become very
10 proactive, because this process in itself
11 has shown a very transparent process. It
12 is proactive, having people come down.
13 What we will hope, that that body -- and
14 you will be independent of us. I don't
15 want you to think we're going to be in
16 charge of that body, but a suggestion
17 that that body follow suit and have
18 discussions in the public, in the
19 neighborhoods similar to what's taking
20 place here.

21 So I just wanted to put that
22 out there, because I want everybody to
23 continue to be involved regardless as to
24 whether or not you end up being a
25 nominee.

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2 So thank you, Madam Chair.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
4 very welcome, Councilman Clarke.

5 With that, let's proceed to our
6 third panel. Please state your name for
7 the record and offer your testimony.

8 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Madam
9 Chairwoman and members of City Council,
10 it is an honor to be before you today.
11 My name is Debra Wolf Goldstein. As
12 requested, I have with me three letters
13 of recommendation that I'd like to offer
14 as a supplement to my application to be a
15 member of the newly formed Commission on
16 Parks and Recreation.

17 For the last 20 years, I have
18 dedicated both my professional life and
19 my volunteer activities to building,
20 maintaining and improving parks and
21 recreational facilities in our community.

22 As a volunteer, most recently I
23 have had the pleasure to serve as Mayor
24 Michael Nutter's representative to the
25 Fairmount Park Commission. Prior to that

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2 appointment, I was an elected member of
3 the Fairmount Park Commission and served
4 as its Vice-President for five years.

5 During my tenure on the
6 Commission, I am most proud of two
7 things. First, taking the lead in
8 advancing the idea and facilitating and
9 negotiating the lease of Memorial Hall to
10 the Please Touch Museum. For me, nothing
11 was more representative of the great
12 possibilities for the Park and the City
13 than when I stood in the wonderfully
14 remodeled Memorial Hall when the Please
15 Touch Museum opened its doors this past
16 fall.

17 Second, working with fellow
18 commissioners, members of City Council,
19 Park advocacy groups and the past and
20 current Administration in analyzing
21 strategic initiatives and governance
22 structures for the Park and its sister
23 organizations. In that effort, I helped
24 author the Mayor's Transition Plan for
25 the Park Department and helped with

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2 selecting the current head of the
3 Recreation Department.

4 I have also served on the
5 Boards of the Friends of the Wissahickon,
6 the Green Space Alliance and the
7 Pennsylvania Land Trust Association.

8 My professional career is
9 dedicated to parks, recreation and open
10 space. I currently run a legal and
11 consulting firm that works on behalf of
12 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, local
13 municipalities, non-profits, land trusts
14 and private property owners to preserve
15 open space for recreational use.

16 Previously, I served as the general
17 counsel to a regional land trust and
18 prior to that I was appointed by
19 then-Governor Casey to oversee the
20 Department of Conservation and Natural
21 Resources' program to fund and develop
22 municipal parks and recreational
23 facilities in Southeastern Pennsylvania.
24 I've also written many articles and
25 public guides on conservation easements,

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2 the use of bond issues to fund open space
3 preservation and limitations on liability
4 for the use of land for recreational
5 purposes.

6 Using my experience, I would
7 like to continue working to make our
8 great City's Park and Recreation system
9 the best in the country.

10 Thank you for your time this
11 afternoon.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
13 for your testimony.

14 Please, sir, proceed.

15 MR. GOUGH: My name is John
16 Francis Gough, G-O-U-G-H.

17 Madam Chairperson and members
18 of the Committee, I think I have some
19 good news for you, and perhaps today is a
20 day on which you would welcome some good
21 news. I have over 15 years experience in
22 a leadership position in precisely the
23 work of this Commission, which is
24 developing, preserving and enhancing the
25 City's Park and Recreation facilities.

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2 My application, of course, is
3 in writing and on file. In the interest
4 of time, I would make three points today.

5 First, I am sure you are all
6 aware of the wonderful section of
7 Fairmount Park along the lower Schuylkill
8 River known as Schuylkill Banks,
9 altogether consisting of some eight or
10 more miles of river and riverbanks
11 running eventually all the way to Fort
12 Mifflin and the Delaware River. It
13 features a lighted and landscaped bike
14 and jogging trail, riverboat tours, crew
15 races, kayaking, evening entertainment
16 and much more.

17 I was the Chair of the task
18 force that developed the 200-page Master
19 Plan for that project. I was one of the
20 original Board members and, in fact, the
21 first Chair of the non-profit
22 organization known as Schuylkill River
23 Development Council, which began that
24 project. I have served continuously for
25 many years as an officer, a Board member

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2 and an executive committee member of the
3 successor entity, Schuylkill River
4 Development Corporation, which is
5 continuing that project today. In those
6 leadership roles with SRDC, I have
7 interacted on a regular basis with
8 federal, state and city agencies,
9 including the Fairmount Park Commission
10 as well as other City departments. This
11 experience will be, in my view,
12 invaluable to the work of the Commission.

13 Second, for many years, I have
14 been an active member of the Center City
15 Residents Association as a resident of
16 that part of the City. CCRA is the
17 City's oldest and largest community
18 organization. I have served for many
19 years, not continuously, on its Board,
20 but my experience with CCRA will be
21 important to the Commission to help forge
22 public-private partnerships to help
23 preserve and enhance the City's Park and
24 Recreation facilities.

25 Third, I am a graduate of Yale

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2 Law School and a practicing Philadelphia
3 lawyer. My practice emphasizes business,
4 finance, real estate. It includes
5 considerable familiarity with
6 governmental RFPs, bidding and the
7 contracting process, all of which are the
8 work of the Commission.

9 I have handed in copies of
10 these remarks and, along with them,
11 letters of recommendation from three
12 sources: Jerry Sweeney, the Chair of
13 SRDC; T.J. Reilly, the past President of
14 CCRA; and Louise Turan, the Executive
15 Director of Bartram's Garden in Fairmount
16 Park.

17 As I said, my application is in
18 writing and it's on file. After these
19 remarks, I would close simply with this:
20 A seat on the Commission is either a
21 position or a job. If it is a position,
22 merely a position, shuffling papers,
23 attending some meetings, add something to
24 your resume, I really have very little
25 interest in it. But if it's a job -- and

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2 I think it is -- then I think that I am
3 prepared, experienced and I know that I'm
4 eager to accept that job with enthusiasm.

5 Thank you for considering my
6 application. I would really like to have
7 this job.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
9 for your testimony.

10 MR. GRAY: Good afternoon. I
11 am honored to be here before this
12 Commission to present my application to
13 the City of Philadelphia's Park and
14 Recreation Commission. My name is Jon
15 Gray and I'm a social worker and a
16 freelance writer for Mount Airy in
17 Philadelphia.

18 Today I prepared the testimony
19 to give to you and I gave you a copy of
20 it, but right now I feel it's more
21 important that I speak from my heart and
22 the hearts of millions of children that
23 live in the City of Philadelphia,
24 millions of people who work in the City
25 of Philadelphia and discuss the reason

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2 why I should be on this Commission.

3 I feel as though that given the
4 current financial obligation of the City,
5 that we must not forget our social
6 obligation to our children, to our
7 adults, those who cannot afford to use
8 recreation at a private facility, those
9 that need recreation fully funded so that
10 they can have after-school programs, so
11 they could have weekend programs and SAT
12 preparation, so that they can be in the
13 gym working on their game to get that
14 Division I scholarship that can uplift
15 their family and uplift their community.

16 I have ideas in this. I've
17 been all around this country. I am an
18 avid high school basketball fan, and I've
19 seen where other countries have used that
20 same -- other counties have used that
21 same incessant love for sport to not only
22 enhance the opportunities for their
23 children, but to provide record new
24 making opportunities.

25 In New York, the City of

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2 Binghamton has a tournament every year
3 called Stop DWI. It's raised over a
4 million dollars for drunk driving
5 programs funded through -- and it was
6 formed by the Mothers Against Drunk
7 Driving. In Baltimore, our sister city
8 to the south, they have also had
9 tournaments called the Mayor's Cup where
10 they have provided opportunities for
11 their kids to receive basketball exposure
12 while raising money for their own
13 recreation departments. Partnering with
14 their school district, they've been able
15 to raise money not only just for the
16 Recreation Department, but for the School
17 District at large.

18 I'm bringing fresh ideas. I'm
19 30 years old. I don't want to read to
20 you a resume of what I've done. I'm just
21 going to tell you what needs to be done.
22 We need to sell this city.

23 Ten years from now there's a
24 possibility that Philadelphia could be on
25 the upswing. Look at Chicago. They've

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2 submitted an Olympic bid, the possibility
3 for them to get money.

4 There's a new thing that the
5 International Olympic Committee has
6 formed and there's only been one of these
7 held. It's called the Youth Olympics.
8 What better springboard for a potential
9 Philadelphia bid for an Olympics than to
10 host the Youth Olympics. That would also
11 raise the fundraising and the minds of
12 the children. Give them the opportunity
13 to take an interest in the parks and
14 recreation of their city because we took
15 an interest in it and we wanted to
16 showcase that to the rest of the world.
17 Those are the ideas we need.

18 Finally, in speaking on parks,
19 I think it's very important that I make
20 this point: We must partner with the
21 School District of Philadelphia, the
22 colleges and universities of this town.
23 They're as much Philadelphian as anybody
24 else. In some ways, the University of
25 Pennsylvania, LaSalle, they supplement

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2 the Recreation Department. They
3 supplement the Parks Department when they
4 open things up for the community. And in
5 this time of economic peril, it is
6 important that we encourage them to
7 continue to do so and to step up. If
8 it's a clinic by Jay Wright in 25th and
9 Diamond on the weekend for 25 kids that
10 want to play basketball, isn't that a
11 great thing? If it's a pool day in
12 Winfield for people who live near St.
13 Joseph's University, isn't that a great
14 thing to have? Those are the ideas I
15 present to you.

16 I hope that you can see that
17 it's not just about where I've been, who
18 I've worked for. My recommendations are
19 coming.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
21 seconds, sir.

22 MR. GRAY: But it's also about
23 where I want to be, where I want my city
24 to be and where I think we need to be,
25 and that's in the minds and hearts of our

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2 children.

3 Thank you for your time.

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

6 We want to thank all of you for
7 your testimony and for your enthusiasm,
8 which is clear. Thank you very much.

9 Councilman Jones.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. Real
11 quick.

12 Thank you for that enthusiastic
13 testimony, and it is probably the first
14 one I've heard that emphasized the
15 recreation aspect of it so strongly, and
16 I think that's an important point to
17 make, because it is Fairmount Park and
18 Recreation Department, and that plays a
19 critical part of what the new system will
20 encompass.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
23 all.

24 MR. GRAY: Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Michael

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2 Grasso, Jeffrey Hackett, Victoria

3 Halliday, please. Behind them sitting in

4 the black chairs, Yvonne Haskins,

5 Christopher Hayes, Darlene Heep.

6 (Witnesses approached witness
7 table.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
9 provide us your testimony prior to you
10 putting it on the record.

11 Okay. You can certainly join
12 them at the witness table.

13 I'll call up Gregory Heller,
14 Thomas Henry, William Hickey, if you
15 could join us in the black chairs.

16 (Witnesses approached witness
17 table.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Welcome.
19 Thank you. Please proceed with your
20 testimony.

21 MS. HALLIDAY: Good afternoon.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Pull the
23 mike closer to you so you can be
24 comfortable.

25 MS. HALLIDAY: Good afternoon.

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2 Thank you to Mayor Nutter and to Council
3 for instating this new Commission on
4 Parks and Recreation for Philadelphia. A
5 city with one of the best urban park
6 systems in the world deserves a good
7 commission to help run it.

8 My name is Victoria Halliday
9 and I live in Pipersville, Bucks County.

10 In these challenging times,
11 some of the City's goals have met
12 obstacles and priorities have had to
13 shift, so the reform in the way the City
14 has planned, maintained and operated by
15 reinstating the influence of commissions
16 is historic. The Park system is the
17 green infrastructure, a means of clean
18 air and water and a dominant design
19 element of the urban fabric of the City.
20 It is the stage for social, cultural and
21 economic equality, because it is
22 available and accessible to everyone. It
23 is a guiding force for the necessary
24 direction back to and forward to
25 sustainability and a balance with nature.

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2 I am grateful and honored for
3 the opportunity to be considered and part
4 of being this exciting time in
5 Philadelphia as the great potential of
6 this massive network of parks has the
7 opportunity to be developed and utilized.
8 The people of Philadelphia and
9 surrounding area and its visitors deserve
10 the best uncompromised park system
11 possible. Its founding visionary,
12 William Penn, designed a city where one
13 would not have to walk more than five
14 minutes before coming across a green area
15 or a park. This garden city represents a
16 wonderful place to live, work and visit,
17 and I can see that this new Commission of
18 Parks and Recreation can help continue
19 that vision.

20 The Commission represents a
21 stabilizing force in the foundation of
22 the City's continual renewal and
23 revitalization. A critical connection
24 and means of communication between the
25 public and the government is now more

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2 possible. Residents of Philadelphia have
3 a good idea of what is important to them
4 and what they need to be happy. A
5 Commission of Parks and Recreation can
6 translate those needs and desires into
7 plans and programs.

8 I will now explain what I feel
9 the Commission could do and how my
10 background, experience and professional
11 training could help contribute and
12 inspire the process.

13 As a registered CLARB-certified
14 landscape architect, I have studied and I
15 am familiar with the design, history and
16 magnitude of the network of parks in
17 Philadelphia. A master plan for renewal
18 and revitalization of the City,
19 particularly in its decaying areas in
20 vital need of recovery, is essential.
21 Parks need to be an intricate part of
22 this plan, both for the benefit of
23 recovering areas but also to make them
24 consistent with the character of the
25 City.

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2 My background in planning and
3 landscape architecture can help with
4 this. I also own and restored three
5 historic buildings and adopted new uses
6 for them, my capabilities to understand
7 what is required and visualize a plan
8 which will contribute to the Park and
9 corresponding urban environmental
10 development.

11 I have an undergraduate degree
12 from Cornell University in the
13 Architecture, Art and Planning School and
14 a Master's in Landscape Architecture from
15 the University of Virginia. I also have
16 an art background. I was a fine art
17 major and I studied painting in the
18 Museum of Fine Art School in Boston. I
19 have lived and practiced landscape
20 architecture in London, England;
21 Baltimore, Maryland; New Haven,
22 Connecticut; Doylestown, Pennsylvania and
23 in Philadelphia as an intern at the Delta
24 Group. I have worked on urban planning
25 projects, garden design, master plans and

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2 park design for both active and passive
3 recreation.

4 The healthy environment of a
5 thriving park system provides affordable
6 and approachable recreation programs.
7 The Commission can continue to develop
8 and expand these programs. My experience
9 as a member of my Bucks County Township's
10 Park and Recreation Commission can assist
11 with these aspects.

12 I am a mother of six-year-old
13 twins and I am aware of how important it
14 is to provide healthy alternatives to
15 watching TV and playing computer games
16 for children.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Fifteen
18 seconds.

19 MS. HALLIDAY: Recently I took
20 my daughter to the newly located Please
21 Touch Museum and was impressed with the
22 direction the City is taking to provide
23 new uses to underutilized or abandoned
24 elements. I'm a frequent park goer of
25 Philadelphia's remarkable green areas. I

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2 have played polo and ridden cross country
3 in Fairmount Park. My parents lived in
4 Philadelphia and I visited them, better
5 to observe the deficiencies of parks
6 which did not provide acceptable ADA
7 access. My father was in a wheelchair.
8 My personal experience of seeing the
9 missing pieces of walkways and bare
10 patches of lawn can make me better
11 qualified to make improvements.

12 Philadelphia's and its Park
13 system's future, including its current
14 struggle in this recession, depend on
15 maintaining its population and attracting
16 people both to move here and visit. As a
17 Bucks County resident who takes advantage
18 of the City's offerings, I have a
19 perspective which can encourage more
20 people to visit and come and stay.

21 All this is not possible
22 without funding. The Commission needs to
23 concentrate on how to get the funds to
24 make these improvements and develop
25 recreation programs. My experience as

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2 the Chairman of the Annual Wine and Polo
3 World Legacy Cup, a polo charity match
4 held in my polo club in Tinicum Park,
5 provides a background for fundraising and
6 organizing events.

7 Forming this Commission is a
8 step in the right direction in building a
9 solid communication line between the
10 public and City government. As a member
11 of the Commission, I will make it a
12 priority that the public and all parts of
13 the public are heard and listened to. I
14 will make it my duty to help organize
15 those wants and needs into realities by
16 creative thinking and applying my
17 background and experience as a landscape
18 architect, planner, sports competitor,
19 sports fan and mother of two children,
20 who I would like to make the world a
21 better place for.

22 Thank you for the opportunity
23 to serve the people of Philadelphia and
24 surrounding area as a member of the
25 Commission of Parks and Recreation.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
3 for your testimony. That was three and a
4 half minutes. So we're going to ask you
5 to honor the clock.

6 Thank you, sir. Next.

7 MR. HACKETT: Good afternoon.
8 My name is Jeff Hackett. I addressed the
9 letter to Councilwoman Anna C. Verna and
10 distinguished Board members. Please
11 accept my greetings. I am here to
12 present my desire to sit on the new
13 Fairmount Park and Recreation Commission.

14 I wrote a short letter because
15 I would like basically -- I believe like
16 the other gentleman, Mr. Gray, what comes
17 from the heart touches the heart. So I'd
18 like to close out with how I really feel.
19 It's kind of hard to put on paper what
20 you actually do.

21 I am currently sitting as
22 President of the Helen G. Sturgis
23 Playground Advisory Board, Melrose Park
24 Gardens Civic Association, the Eagle Eye
25 Task Force and the Police Department

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2 Advisory Council. My heart is with our
3 children.

4 At Sturgis we have been blessed
5 to have incorporated programs that are
6 able to address the needs of an entire
7 community. We sat back and watched the
8 things that were important to different
9 ethnic groups and tried to come up with a
10 plan that would include everyone. It was
11 a challenge and trying at times, but
12 through trial and error, we were able to
13 find the right mixture. Our playground
14 has developed into a social gathering
15 place for all.

16 Breaking taboos is not the
17 easiest thing to do, but with love and
18 respect, we have Asian, Hispanics,
19 African Americans and Europeans existing
20 in the same space without hostile
21 behavior. We take pride in co-ed,
22 multi-cultural and generational diverse
23 activities, thus not only promoting
24 exercise but closing the gap on
25 indifference.

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2 We have park clean-ups, which
3 include grass and flower planting, as
4 well as trimming our own grass when
5 needed. Recycling is a new project that
6 we have incorporated in our daily habits.
7 In doing so, we are teaching people to
8 respect their environment and their
9 community. By helping the individual,
10 you help the group, and by helping the
11 group, you help the family, and by
12 helping the family, you help your
13 neighborhood.

14 I remember talking to an elder
15 in my old neighborhood about a group of
16 children playing on an old mattress in
17 the park and saying, Someone should help
18 them find something to better do before
19 they hurt themselves. She replied to me,
20 If you don't see a leader, it might be
21 your turn.

22 That conversation so many years
23 ago is the same motivation that helps me
24 find the energy and hope to push, knowing
25 that one day, all may feel what I feel

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2 today. I'd like to thank you for this
3 time and consideration on this monumental
4 position.

5 Now, if I may expand a little
6 bit on what we do at Sturgis. I'm
7 old-school. I was taught great
8 grandmother, grandmother things. Zero
9 tolerance is zero tolerance.

10 There's three types of people
11 in the world: Those who watch things
12 happen, those who make things happen and
13 those who wonder what the heck just
14 happened. Well, we're doers. About six
15 years ago, they were going to close
16 Sturgis Playground down. We decided, no,
17 you're not. I sat the people down, grown
18 folks older than me, in the middle of our
19 volleyball court. If you want to play up
20 here, you're going to stop the
21 name-calling, you're going to stop the
22 ethnic intimidation, you're going to stop
23 the gender bullying. I took the
24 basketball courts down. I put it up when
25 we were there and able to monitor what

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2 was going on.

3 In less than a summer, they
4 were addressing adults as "Miss" and
5 "Mrs." The cursing has pretty much
6 stopped. Grandmothers are back up there
7 reading. We have every different ethnic
8 group playing together, not just in the
9 park, actually playing together. We took
10 children that were so-called the thugs of
11 the neighborhood. Well, I made them
12 coaches. Now they're being responsible
13 right now. You know, we took kids that
14 are doing well. We taught them how to
15 teach tennis, how to do things, how to
16 make money, how to become entrepreneurs.
17 We incorporated ourselves.

18 We're going out to the high
19 schools right now and we're inviting in
20 people from the high schools of the arts
21 to come perform. Now, we took it upon
22 ourselves to buy equipment.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
24 seconds.

25 MR. HACKETT: To buy equipment.

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2 So what we're doing, we're doing free
3 concerts, and the children are working
4 the vending stands and they're making
5 money for their children.

6 I'm not going to go over my
7 time, because you're not going to get me.
8 Thank you much.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Your
10 enthusiasm is contagious. It's very
11 important when we're trying to make a
12 difference in the lives of young people.
13 Thank you for your testimony.

14 Please.

15 MS. HASKINS: Bravo.

16 Madam Chairman, members of City
17 Council, I just think the huge outpouring
18 of interest of over, you said, 250 people
19 in a volunteer job is just remarkable. I
20 think it's amazing. It speaks to the
21 spark, the genuine interest in reforming
22 our Parks and Recreation system, and I
23 just want to applaud this Council and our
24 Mayor for this initiative.

25 I appreciate the opportunity to

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2 speak briefly about my passion for
3 Fairmount Park and for Recreation in
4 general and why I would like to be
5 nominated to the team to deliver on its
6 purpose.

7 Fairmount Park is the greatest
8 possible field of dreams we can imagine.
9 Studies about the Park indicate its
10 potential for our quality, our quality of
11 life, its potential for generating
12 revenue, and yet I believe this Council
13 and our Mayor expect a lot more than
14 that. I think that the Fairmount Park
15 and Recreation can be the great equalizer
16 among our citizens. I think it can be
17 potentially a magnet for people from
18 around the world.

19 A friend recently told me about
20 some parks in London called the "String
21 of Pearls." These are small parks in
22 various neighborhoods, linked creatively
23 to encourage tourists in a way that may
24 be a useful model for us to look at.

25 In this brief time allotted,

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2 I'd like to offer a vision that I believe
3 is bold and inclusive, a vision that can
4 engage even the "average Joe" in any
5 community, a vision that can engage the
6 young people of our community. My vision
7 recalls the fun of the old Woodside
8 Amusement Park before 1955, where my
9 family enjoyed so many outings together.
10 Now, it's not in Fairmount Park, but it's
11 just at the edge and we used to ride a
12 trolley car to get to it, so we thought
13 we were in the Park. It's so exciting to
14 see that the old Woodside Park carousel
15 we enjoyed in those days has been
16 restored in the Please Touch Museum.

17 My vision also considers my
18 current enjoyment of Carpenter's Woods,
19 which is a block from my home, and the
20 Wissahickon Trail, where I hike
21 frequently. Most importantly, I think,
22 my vision takes into account the vacant,
23 abandoned sites all over north, west and
24 other parts of Philadelphia. Many of
25 these communities will never be rebuilt,

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2 given our population decline. Can you
3 picture small parks with ball fields,
4 urban gardens and conservation projects
5 in these spaces, all managed and well
6 kept by the surrounding communities?
7 What about Major League Baseball
8 supporting little league teams throughout
9 our Park and Recreation system?
10 Visualize the rust belts on the commuter
11 train lines and you'll see many
12 opportunities to create a "string of
13 pearls" in Philadelphia. Such
14 rejuvenation out in our communities
15 contributes directly to the rejuvenation
16 of our Park and Recreation system.

17 Further, the challenge of
18 educating our youth to understand
19 conservation is paramount. Fairmount
20 Park can have a major role in educating
21 youth in our neighborhoods. Our future
22 depends on kids understanding why we need
23 to conserve our water and why we need to
24 take care of our soil. Teams of students
25 throughout the City could be engaged in

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2 hands-on projects that are useful to open
3 space conservation and water quality.
4 Introducing careers in state forestry and
5 water management could excite and
6 energize students about owning their
7 parkland.

8 The leadership you choose to
9 develop our Park and Recreation system
10 must engage people and communities in
11 every nook and cranny of Philadelphia.
12 Such engagement, together with
13 transparency, in planning our Park's --

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Fifteen
15 seconds.

16 MS. HASKINS: -- future is what
17 excites me.

18 Thank you very much. I have
19 included two recommendations, one from
20 Bernard Watson and one from Ken
21 Weinstein, and they are included in the
22 package.

23 Thank you very much for your
24 attention.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're

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2 very, very welcome.

3 Thank you all for your interest
4 and clear evidence, as I said early on,
5 that the idea is so reassuring when you
6 look at where we are and where we want to
7 go to. Thank you all.

8 Christopher Hayes, Darlene
9 Heep, Gregory Heller, Thomas Henry,
10 William Hickey.

11 (Witnesses approached witness
12 table.)

13 MR. HICKEY: Please forgive the
14 cover. I was in education for 35 years.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Teachers
16 and educators do that, don't we? I
17 appreciate it. Thank you very much.

18 Welcome, gentlemen. Please
19 state your name and proceed with your
20 testimony. We'll start with the
21 gentleman on my extreme left.

22 MR. HELLER: My name is Gregory
23 Heller. Thank you for this opportunity
24 to speak to you today.

25 Through your vision, this new

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2 Commission on Parks and Recreation has
3 the opportunity to set a new direction.
4 The question is, what direction will that
5 be?

6 As someone deeply involved in
7 the planning of our communities, parks
8 and public realm, I would be honored to
9 have the responsibility in answering this
10 question.

11 Philadelphia's park system is
12 world class. To develop the regional
13 support and financial resources the
14 system needs, we need to focus on
15 building connections, connections with
16 communities, institutions, transportation
17 and with the region.

18 As Planning Director for the
19 Parkside Historic Preservation
20 Corporation and now at the Delaware
21 Valley Regional Planning Commission, I
22 have been intimately involved in the
23 planning of the Centennial District.
24 This strategy of connecting institutions
25 in the Park is something we can and

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2 should apply to other areas. It will
3 give us the opportunity to attract a
4 critical mass of visitors and open doors
5 for new funding sources.

6 In Parkside, I often heard
7 residents say that they felt disconnected
8 from the Park, yet the expanse of the
9 West Park sat just beyond their front
10 porches. We need much more proactive
11 neighborhood planning, physically and
12 psychologically connect communities with
13 their Park resources.

14 A big part of attracting
15 visitors relies on transportation. We
16 need to ensure excellent access to all
17 parts of our Park system and publicize
18 those transportation connections, working
19 closely with the Deputy Mayor for
20 Transportation and Utilities. Through my
21 work at DVRPC, I am well familiar with
22 the avenues for making this connection
23 possible.

24 Parks and trails cross
25 municipal lines and have a regional draw.

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2 We need to think and plan like a region.

3 There should be a multi-municipal task
4 force to capitalize on the region's
5 recreation funding.

6 In my application, I mapped out
7 specific initiatives and funding sources.
8 However, more important is this overall
9 direction for the Park system.

10 I bring a diverse range of
11 qualifications to help guide this
12 direction and build these connections. I
13 bring experience in community
14 development, historic preservation and
15 regional planning.

16 Through my work on the
17 governing bodies of the Design Advocacy
18 Group, Travelers Aid, the Ed Bacon
19 Foundation and the Washington Square West
20 Civic Association, I have demonstrated a
21 track record as a civic leader and an
22 experienced fundraiser, with the
23 reputation for tackling challenging
24 initiatives.

25 As author of the celebrated

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2 publication "Promoting Civic Design
3 Excellence in Philadelphia," I have been
4 widely recognized as a leading advocate
5 for the public realm.

6 My policy work is well
7 published and respected locally and
8 nationally. I have spoken at national
9 venues about public realm planning. I
10 have spent years serving in various
11 capacities on the planning of the
12 Centennial District and the future of our
13 parks.

14 We need commissioners who
15 understand national models, with
16 experience in community and regional
17 public realm planning and policy. I
18 would be honored if you will afford me
19 the opportunity to bring my passion,
20 experience and ideas to help build these
21 connections for a stronger Park system
22 and for a stronger future.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
25 for your testimony.

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2 Good afternoon.

3 MR. HICKEY: My name is Bill
4 Hickey. Just another Bill. And my
5 strength lies in raising the expectations
6 and getting the money together to make
7 the expectations worth raising.

8 When I was in first grade at
9 St. Columbus at 24th and Lehigh, I was
10 the kid that sold the most pretzels.
11 When I moved on to high school, I was the
12 kid that worked with the Augustinians at
13 Bonner and raised \$20,000 in one week at
14 the Bonner Fair. When I became a
15 guidance counselor at Hatboro-Horsham
16 Student Council Advisory, we threw a
17 state conference which raised the bar.
18 My students and I raised a quarter
19 million dollars, and spent it in 48
20 hours. And in addition to that, raised
21 135,000 for Habitat for Humanity and
22 bought eight houses.

23 So where I'm coming from with
24 Fairmount Park, which has got to be one
25 of the neatest places on this particular

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2 planet, I mean, it's the largest park
3 system metropolitan on the planet. We
4 can do a lot more. We got two rivers. I
5 never see any wave runners on those
6 rivers. I never see any paddle boats. I
7 never see any boating competitions other
8 than the scullers, and that's great, but
9 they're not there all the time.

10 I see mansions that sit and
11 deteriorate, where we have the Williamson
12 School of Free Trades right out there in
13 Delaware County, and they love to build
14 things. We've got Eastern Center for
15 Arts and Technology sitting there in
16 Montgomery County, where I'm from.
17 Although I have to tell you, when I
18 travel around the world, people say,
19 Well, where are you from? I don't say
20 I'm from Dresher, Pennsylvania. I'm from
21 Philadelphia, which has the greatest
22 skyline that I've seen anywhere.

23 The City of Dusseldorf -- this
24 is my big thing you'll see in there --
25 every year they throw a carnival. Four

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2 million people attend, and they walk away
3 with 500,000 euros. Now, that's serious
4 money. That would double the Park
5 budget. We could fix those 30 mansions.
6 We could -- each one of them, is there a
7 reason why they can't be a revenue
8 stream? We can make it better, and the
9 better you make it, the better the
10 attendance is going to be.

11 They used to joke at the high
12 school with my Student Council kids when
13 it came to fundraising. Cheerleaders
14 would have a car wash and they'd have 50
15 cheerleaders out there for six hours in
16 the sun, and I would say, Well, how much
17 did you make?

18 Oh, we made \$200.

19 The athletic director would
20 say, Hickey wouldn't get his kids out of
21 bed for less than a grand.

22 So there's ways to do it, and I
23 am a bridge builder. I am a different
24 kind of thinker. I love the outdoors. I
25 was going to wear my Eagles jacket, but

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2 you know, it shrunk. I just can't
3 believe that would happen to me.

4 And I think the neatest thing I
5 ever did growing up in Philadelphia, 27th
6 and Lehigh, was when my dad took me to
7 Connie Mack, I saw grass for the first
8 time. I used to go up to 27th and
9 Clearfield to the "swimmies," where I
10 learned a lot more than swimming.

11 This place has all of the
12 ingredients of being one of the most
13 outstanding recreational areas in the
14 area, and I'd like to be part of it.
15 Make it work, bring in some bucks.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
18 for your testimony.

19 MR. HENRY: My name is Tom
20 Henry. I don't have a written testimony,
21 and I hope that you won't see that as a
22 disrespect to you at all.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Not at
24 all. Let me just say for the record,
25 what mattered most was getting the

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2 application in on time. This is the
3 second stage of that process. Written
4 testimony is not required, but it's
5 certainly helpful as we deliberate once
6 we have had a chance to hear from the
7 250.

8 So if you do not have it today
9 and you wish for us to have something,
10 you're welcome to send in your testimony
11 or deliver your testimony soon after
12 today.

13 MR. HENRY: Okay. Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
15 welcome.

16 MR. HENRY: Thank you.

17 I have been involved in the
18 park area and recreation for many, many
19 years in the City of Philadelphia, and as
20 I sit here, I think that when we talk
21 about the parks, that the Park is going
22 to be fine. I think when you talk about
23 green areas and that movement by the
24 President and resources in that area,
25 that the Park will be fine. What I'm

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2 more concerned about is recreation and
3 recreation facilities and planning and
4 programming in those kind of facilities.

5 I am the President of
6 Kingsessing Advisory Council. I have
7 volunteered at that facility in one
8 capacity or another for over 30 years.
9 And I don't like to talk about what I've
10 been able to accomplish, but rather what
11 people have been able to accomplish
12 working together.

13 I don't think that we use the
14 recreation centers today to reach our
15 fullest potential, to reach our children.
16 We sit in the middle of a biomedical
17 area, yet we don't use our recreation
18 centers to teach as much as we possibly
19 could teach and to help them understand
20 that there are other avenues out there
21 for them and other jobs that they could
22 be doing that they're not aware of at
23 all.

24 And so I think that if we use
25 recreation centers -- and I've been

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2 involved at them across the City. I ran
3 a softball league in the City that was 43
4 teams at its peak, and I was involved in
5 recreation centers, advocated for the
6 conditions of those centers throughout
7 the City, and we put rules and bylaws in
8 place that made you clean those fields,
9 and you were fined if you did not clean
10 those fields. Bought equipment to keep
11 those fields up. So because we didn't
12 have grass cut or those things, that was
13 no excuse for them not to look well. We
14 had to take some responsibility
15 ourselves. So we were taught that, and I
16 think we need to be teaching the same
17 thing to our young children.

18 We need to have a strong
19 emphasis on developing youth advisory
20 councils throughout this city. One of
21 the things -- and I really don't want to
22 disrespect anyone, but one of the
23 problems that I have, when I see young
24 people standing on a corner soliciting
25 funds, when we should be teaching them

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2 how to do development. And we can do
3 those kinds of things in recreation
4 centers, and through that process -- I've
5 been there over 30-some years. Not going
6 to be around a lot longer, but we need
7 some young people in place to keep that
8 banter going.

9 So that's all I have to say,
10 and I hope my work speaks for me.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
13 all for your testimony.

14 Any questions from members of
15 the Committee?

16 Councilman Jones.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
18 all for your testimony.

19 By way of the Centennial
20 District, one of the things that I like
21 about it is becoming a gathering place, a
22 multi-cultural gathering place, from
23 everything from cricket to people who are
24 playing touch football, and it almost is
25 serving as a town square, if you would.

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2 And if we could replicate that kind of
3 intergenerational, interracial,
4 gender-neutral kind of activities, I
5 think that that's a vision worth having
6 for our Park system, where everyone feels
7 comfortable in the Park. So I just
8 underscore that, put a period at the end
9 of that sentence.

10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
12 gentlemen.

13 Patricia Hill, Brad Hoffman,
14 John Hogan. Following those witnesses
15 will be David Hollenberg, Alexander
16 Hoskins, Nicole Hostettler.

17 (Witnesses approached witness
18 table.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
20 afternoon, everyone.

21 (Good afternoon.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
23 Please allow us to have your testimony
24 before you get started. That's helpful.

25 Ms. Hill, proceed.

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2 MS. HILL: My name is Patricia
3 Hill. I am a longtime resident of the
4 Brewerytown area of Philadelphia, and
5 until retirement, I had a long career
6 with the Philadelphia Department of
7 Recreation, rising from a part-time
8 summer employee to one of the highest
9 field positions in the Department of
10 Recreation, Leader 3. At one point I
11 worked as well for Fairmount Park's
12 Recreation Department. I'd like to think
13 my experience in planning and
14 implementing programming of all kinds,
15 cultural, social, athletic, in
16 playgrounds and recreation facilities of
17 all sizes, serving a wide range of
18 communities across this great city, could
19 be very valuable on the new Parks and
20 Recreation Department's Commission.

21 I see this union as exciting,
22 but challenging. I would love to do
23 everything possible to make it
24 successful. It's been debated for a very
25 long time, and here it is. As is often

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2 noted in these trying times, in challenge
3 there is opportunity.

4 At the risk of going on too
5 long, I would like to add that since
6 retiring and even before, I have worked
7 hard to bring people together in my
8 neighborhood and to improve the quality
9 of life there. After years of downward
10 spiral and people leaving in droves, it
11 feels now more like part of William
12 Penn's "green country town," which will
13 never be burnt and always be wholesome.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
15 Good afternoon.

16 MR. HOGAN: Good afternoon. My
17 name is John Hogan. Madam Chair Lady,
18 members of the Committee, first of all,
19 thank you for creating this combined
20 Commission. It's been a long time coming
21 and it's certainly been needed. And
22 thank you for this opportunity to support
23 my application to become a Commissioner
24 on Parks and Recreation.

25 I am not a person easily given

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2 to self-promotion, but the newly created
3 Commission on Parks and Recreation is so
4 very important to the vitality and
5 long-term health of Philadelphia that I
6 must give it my fullest support.

7 I will keep my remarks short,
8 but I have submitted supporting documents
9 to the Chair. Thank you.

10 If I am appointed to the
11 Commission, I would contribute over 20
12 years of business and marketing
13 expertise. Over those 20 years, I have
14 learned to accept difficult financial
15 times as opportunities to reexamine our
16 operations, asking questions such as,
17 where can we operate more efficiently,
18 where is there duplication, how can we
19 offer the same level of service but with
20 less cost. That attitude of seizing the
21 opportunity will serve the Commission and
22 Philadelphia well during the next few
23 years.

24 And over the last 20 years, I
25 have gained an equal amount of experience

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2 in volunteering with neighborhood
3 athletic associations, civic groups,
4 political, cultural and environmental
5 groups throughout the City. I pledge to
6 never waver in my duty to the Commission
7 and the citizens of Philadelphia.

8 I do not look on this position
9 as a stepping stone to other office or a
10 chance to financially benefit myself or
11 my business. I would be proud and
12 honored to be part of all of our efforts
13 to make this wonderful city the right
14 place to live, learn and have fun.

15 Thank you for your attention.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
17 for your testimony.

18 Please, sir.

19 MR. HOFFMAN: Good afternoon,
20 Madam Chairperson and Council. My name
21 is Brad Hoffman.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Did you
23 share with us testimony?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: No, I did not. I
25 apologize for not bringing copies.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

3 Please.

4 MR. HOFFMAN: My name is Brad
5 Hoffman. I'm a graduate of the LeBow
6 College of Business at Drexel University,
7 having received my undergraduate degree
8 in finance and international business, as
9 well as an MBA there in finance more
10 recently.

11 I'm currently an active member
12 of the Board of Directors of Franklin's
13 Paine Skate Park Fund founded and based
14 in Philadelphia. Upon graduating from
15 Drexel, I wanted to work to bring places
16 to skateboard to Philadelphia and raise
17 the activities of awareness among youth,
18 elected officials and my community. I
19 feel that skateboarding creates an outlet
20 for youth and can provide a pure-based
21 activity that steers at-risk youth from
22 otherwise unproductive and dangerous
23 activities.

24 As a Board member, we have
25 worked to revitalize neighborhoods,

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2 including Kensington and South
3 Philadelphia, as well as Whitehall Skate
4 Park in North Philadelphia, while also
5 developing an after-school program to
6 introduce skateboarding in some of
7 Philadelphia's toughest neighborhoods.

8 Also as a Board member, we have
9 been developing Paine's Park and the
10 banks of the Schuylkill River. Paine's
11 Park will be a two-and-a-half-acre
12 facility for skateboarding; however, also
13 designed and open to the general public.
14 This process has introduced me to
15 community outreach, watershed and
16 landscape management and, most
17 importantly, the need for a unified
18 Commission to plan and develop
19 Philadelphia's resources. During my
20 tenure with Franklin's Paine, we've
21 raised millions of dollars for these
22 activities.

23 My present-day job includes the
24 management and financing of commercial
25 real estate nationwide, and my previous

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2 positions have included arranging capital
3 for some of the largest real estate
4 transactions in Philadelphia.

5 I've lived here since 1997 and
6 have lived in almost every neighborhood
7 in the City.

8 So I thank you for your time,
9 and have a great afternoon.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
11 all for your testimony.

12 To make life a little easier
13 for you, if you leave your testimony, we
14 can make copies today. That way you
15 don't have to circle back downtown.

16 MR. HOFFMAN: Terrific. Thank
17 you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
19 all.

20 David Hollenberg, Pete Hoskins
21 and Nicole Hostettler to move to the
22 witness table. They shall be followed by
23 Richard Huffman, Eric Iffrig and Brendan
24 Isard.

25 (Witnesses approached witness

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2 table.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

4 afternoon, everyone.

5 (Good everyone.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please

7 proceed. We have testimony. Okay.

8 MS. HOSTETTLER: Hi. I'm

9 Nicole Hostettler.

10 A neighbor of mine recently
11 said to me, The Park means a lot to me,
12 and I think that's pretty much it amongst
13 all of us here.

```
14         I love this city.  I moved here
15     from Detroit.  This is my adopted
16     hometown.
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17 The enthusiasm is contagious.
18 The Nutter Administration, the Obama
19 Administration has infused this
20 excitement with all of my neighbors and
21 all of my friends and colleagues in this
22 city.

23 What can I offer as a Park
24 Commissioner? I'm a licensed and
25 certified national and state planner. My

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2 past work includes volunteering with
3 AmeriCorps in Chicago public housing.
4 Now, starting a recycling program in
5 public housing is not easy, and that was,
6 by far, one of my biggest challenges.

7 I currently work as a municipal
8 planner in a suburban community. I write
9 code, ordinance. I work with land use
10 issues constantly and zoning. I have an
11 extensive, though not wanted, storm water
12 management knowledge due to our poor
13 soils and need to mitigate against this.
14 I've worked with that Planning Board for
15 almost six years overseeing and
16 administering and writing staff reports
17 for. I clearly understand the importance
18 of plan and standards such as our created
19 Philadelphia GreenPlan and the Fairmount
20 Master Plan, which is a sound basis of
21 land use and environmental park and
22 recreation planning.

23 In my South Philadelphia
24 community, I currently serve as the
25 President of the Friends of Gold Star

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2 Park. We're a very small pocket park
3 that's overrun by all sorts of users,
4 leading to all sorts of conflict. So
5 we've recently teamed with PHS and
6 Community Design Collaborative to do a
7 master plan for this park. I work with
8 the PHS Philadelphia Green Parks
9 Revitalization Project, which is a great
10 project, and I encourage anyone that's
11 interested in parks today here to join
12 that committee. It served as an
13 invaluable resource.

14 Currently, we're trying to form
15 the South Philadelphia Parks Alliance and
16 share resources and time and volunteers.
17 I also serve on a PHS dogs task force
18 committee. We're trying to find policy
19 and guidelines for the City that equate
20 to Boston's, Baltimore, San Francisco, as
21 we currently do not have a dogs policy in
22 the parks.

23 I've held many fundraisers for
24 Passyunk Square Civic Association,
25 including initiating a fundraiser which

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2 has become an annual event. I also
3 drafted a grant application resulting in
4 a \$50,000 commercial corridor grant award
5 for the Lower Italian Market Association,
6 and I'm proud to say that this year we
7 won the 2009 National Planning Award.

8 If you don't take me, at least
9 take my ideas, and my ideas are
10 considering private sponsorship;
11 expanding the "low mow" movement where
12 appropriate in large parks; increasing
13 enforcement and fines for dumping, which
14 is a chronic problem in all parts across
15 the City; improving the website to
16 provide an area for online donations;
17 continual partnering with tourist
18 agencies and providing a comprehensive
19 map and guide for the entire Park system,
20 because it's not there right now and it's
21 needed; determining the feasibility of
22 interim use for vacant lots as open
23 space. There are many vacant lots in my
24 neighborhood that could be used for
25 community gardening and other things in

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2 the interim.

3 Applying green principles and
4 sustainable programs to school
5 playgrounds, as recently exhibited at the
6 National Building Museum; advocate for
7 zoning codes to create more public spaces
8 in dense areas, such as downtown; and
9 developer contribution for off-site green
10 space; provide also a central resource
11 for individual fundraising to help places
12 like the Mann and the Mummers Museum
13 become self-sustainable; and apply
14 adaptive reuse techniques to historic
15 City structures, such as the Please Touch
16 Museum, which was mentioned several
17 times.

18 I know many folks that are
19 applying for this position, and they're
20 all remarkable. So good luck with your
21 choice, and I truly appreciate this
22 opportunity. This is something that I
23 think previous Administrations you would
24 have never seen.

25 Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
3 thank you for your goodwill. We do have
4 an awesome opportunity. We must look at
5 the glass as half full always. Thank you
6 very much.

7 MS. HOSTETTLER: Thank you.

8 MR. HOLLENBERG: That was
9 great.

10 Hi. My name is David
11 Hollenberg. Thank you for the privilege
12 of testifying on behalf of my application
13 to serve as a member of the new
14 Commission on Parks and Recreation, a
15 very welcomed new commission. My
16 application is inspired by my deep love
17 of Philadelphia and the value I see in
18 strengthening what is already a robust
19 Parks and Recreation system.

20 I cannot imagine this city as a
21 place, much less as an idea, without its
22 astonishing network of public open space
23 and without the clear meaning of that
24 open space to all of us as its citizens.

25 It is so much more than an

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2 extraordinary physical asset.

3 Parks and recreation reach into
4 all of our lives, enabling the City to
5 reach goals of sustaining natural beauty
6 and land, educating citizens, providing
7 economic development to our neighborhoods
8 and, most importantly, perhaps weaving
9 together a social fabric that sustains
10 our connections to each other as people.

11 I relish the opportunity to
12 bring more than 33 years of architecture
13 experience as well as my passion for
14 Philadelphia to this new and very
15 welcomed Commission. Currently, I am the
16 university architect at the University of
17 Pennsylvania. I am entranced by the fact
18 that open space connecting to the City is
19 at the core of the University's eastward
20 expansion, and that such visible optimism
21 about open space is playing such a role
22 in expanding the idea of the University
23 and its meaning to the City. This is a
24 powerful perspective I think to bring to
25 the new Commission.

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Similarly, throughout 14 years at the National Park Service, I actively participated in or led typically interdisciplinary responses to challenges very similar to what the City's new Commission will face - inadequately funded preventive maintenance, barely funded deferred maintenance, competing budget priorities, the constant need to understand and enlarge our constituencies, juggling multiple and often conflicting uses ranging from contemplation to recreation.

I am deeply tied to the City and I have been throughout a career that's had several interwoven themes - stewardship of important places, respect for public policy and process and passion about the intersection of the modern city and its rich past. These themes summarized in my resume span 17 years as a private-sector architect specializing in historic preservation, 14 years as an architect with the National Park Service

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2 here in Philadelphia where I served as
3 Associate Regional Director in charge of
4 design and construction for the northeast
5 region of the United States, and now for
6 almost three years as a university
7 architect at Penn.

8 I must say I also served for
9 eight years during Mayor Goode's
10 Administration on the Philadelphia
11 Historical Commission as both
12 Commissioner and Chair of its
13 Architecture Review Committee. I
14 relished the opportunity to give back to
15 the City in that way. I would love to do
16 so again.

17 I've been a member of the
18 faculty of Penn's Graduate Department of
19 Historic Preservation for 20 years and I
20 have taught a course called Preservation
21 through Public Policy for the last ten.
22 I'd love to have this as a case study of
23 public policy.

24 The application process has
25 reminded me of the deep professional

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2 satisfaction of my service on the
3 Historical Commission. Its intersection
4 of stewardship, design, policy and
5 management is for me a professional sweet
6 spot. I believe that the issues that the
7 new Commission will confront and the
8 extraordinary resources that it must care
9 for and about will necessitate comfort at
10 a similar but perhaps even more
11 challenging intersection.

12 Last, I would like to state
13 that I came to Philadelphia in 1971 to
14 attend graduate school at Penn, where I
15 received my Master's in 1975. I fell in
16 love with this city, have never left and
17 never will. I see this as a chance to
18 serve the city that has become my home
19 and its people who have become my
20 friends, my neighbors and my fellow
21 citizens.

22 Thank you very much.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
24 for your testimony.

25 Good afternoon.

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2 MS. HOSKINS: Good afternoon.

3 Well, I just want to say, you guys really
4 did it. I feel so good being here today
5 and what you have done to bring together
6 this many great people. I might be one
7 of the losers in this process, but I
8 think we are all winners really for what
9 you have done.

10 As you said, Councilman,
11 however we go beyond today, I really hope
12 that we can continue to harness the power
13 of the many people that I've heard today,
14 as well as the other hundreds that will
15 appear before you.

16 My own experience actually as
17 it's outlined in the application tends to
18 focus on things like Park Director and
19 such, but I'd really like to harken a
20 little more back to my earlier days
21 working for the Water Tower Recreation
22 Center and more recently Mount Airy
23 baseball, where I'm quite active as a
24 coach and working helping fix the fields
25 and things like that. So all of my

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2 experience isn't just with a suit on. I
3 want you to know that.

4 There are few people in
5 Philadelphia today who are fortunate to
6 have the unique parks and
7 recreation-related experiences that I
8 have had over the past 35 years.
9 Philadelphia is blessed with many who
10 have served as volunteers in parks
11 friends organizations, rec advisory
12 councils or who have served directly as
13 coaches and league officials. We have
14 many individuals who have extensive
15 knowledge and skills as historians,
16 horticulturists, landscape architects,
17 city planners, engineers, maintenance
18 professionals, recreational leaders and
19 many other diverse professional needs of
20 a parks and recreation department. There
21 are also many Philadelphians who have
22 served on many Boards at the community,
23 city and regional level who have served
24 us exceptionally well. I am especially
25 fortunate to have close experience

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2 working with or overseeing the work of
3 each of those kinds of citizens and many
4 more.

5 Beyond just being associated
6 with many professionals and many
7 outstanding Philadelphians, I have worked
8 to bring people together toward many
9 creative solutions. Among those
10 solutions were Fairmount Park's first
11 Development Department to raise millions
12 of dollars back in the '80s, a Friends of
13 Philadelphia Parks that ultimately became
14 the Philadelphia Parks Alliance,
15 Fairmount Park Historic House Council,
16 the Park Ranger program, the Streets
17 Department Sanitation Enforcement
18 program, and agreements with the
19 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to
20 recreate the Azalea Garden and the 26th
21 Street Airport Gateway, Golf Course Lease
22 program, the Pennsylvania Zoological
23 Council to gain support for Pennsylvania
24 zoos, and now the emerging Centennial
25 District, which I actually authored the

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2 first idea about the Centennial District
3 and I'm so glad to see that happening.

4 In each of these cases and
5 more, I have been successful in bringing
6 together political, civic, business,
7 institution and community leaders in
8 innovative solutions for Philadelphia
9 assets. In some cases, the solutions
10 have prospered even beyond their original
11 goals. In others, there have been some
12 disappointments and the need for
13 reworking.

14 I clearly know from experience
15 that we must learn from the successes and
16 the disappointments and continue to even
17 better ideas for the future. My optimism
18 for the future has been recharged by the
19 recent City Charter changes for Parks and
20 Recreation and the new dedication among
21 the Mayor and City Council leaders. The
22 new economics are truly daunting, and the
23 opportunity for using our parks as
24 investment assets to leverage
25 Philadelphia to greatness is as strong as

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2 ever. I believe the new leadership and
3 the necessary commitment I would
4 equally -- excuse me; I would be equally
5 committed to seeing them succeed in that
6 endeavor.

7 Being a good Commissioner of
8 Parks and Recreation will take more than
9 attending the necessary committee and
10 board meetings and voting correctly. It
11 will mean staying current on the nation's
12 best practices and helping to develop and
13 author recommendations for how to apply
14 those practices in the best manner for
15 Philadelphia. It will mean speaking to
16 community groups and to listen to their
17 needs and to help shape the best
18 solutions for our new Parks and
19 Recreation Department. And it will mean
20 giving my best advice even when there may
21 be outspoken disagreement from within the
22 Administration or from some stakeholders.

23 Beyond being critical advisors
24 to the Mayor, I believe that
25 commissioners must be active ambassadors

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2 in supporting the value of Parks and
3 Recreation assets in Philadelphia. This
4 includes, of course, being advocates for
5 Parks and Recreation budgets as city
6 investments and the quality of life for
7 Philadelphia residents and for attracting
8 visitors.

9 I would use my role as
10 Commissioner to speak publicly in support
11 of City capital and operating budget
12 investments in Parks and Recreation
13 assets that provide significant returns,
14 while also seeking ways to leverage those
15 taxpayer investments with foundation,
16 corporate and individual philanthropic
17 support, as well as more creative ways to
18 gain revenues to the City through user
19 fees. In all cases, such funding
20 increases should be used to support
21 universal access to Parks and Recreation
22 programs regardless of ability to pay.

23 I look forward to serving.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So let me

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2 thank each one of you for your very
3 unique perspective and your testimony,
4 and to Dr. Hollenberg, with the consent
5 of the co-sponsor of this legislation and
6 now law, after we get through this
7 process, we would feel great if you would
8 make this a case study for your class.

9 MR. HOLLENBERG: You got a
10 deal, but you just gave me a doctorate
11 that I do not have and I thank you for
12 that. I did not know that that was going
13 to be a benefit of this application
14 process.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So with
16 his consent as a former educator, I get
17 it, and it would be our pleasure.

18 Thank you all very much.

19 Richard Huffman, Eric
20 I-F-F-R-I-G. I'm always not feeling well
21 when I mispronounce a name. Brendan
22 Isard. And to follow, please come to the
23 black chairs Voffee Jabateh,
24 J-A-B-A-T-E-H, Lavone Jackson, Omar
25 Jefferson.

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2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 MR. HUFFMAN: My name is
5 Richard Huffman. My wife and I live in
6 Center City, where we've resided for 38
7 years. Our children have participated on
8 athletic events on the Parkway and the
9 fields of Fairmount Park, and our family
10 has enjoyed City Parks and Recreation
11 facilities, including our membership at
12 the Mann Center of Performing Arts.

13 I am very interested in the
14 Commission on Parks and Recreation for
15 three reasons: My experience in urban
16 parks and redevelopment planning
17 throughout the country and abroad; my
18 availability after retiring from my firm,
19 Wallace, Roberts & Todd; and my interest
20 in giving back to the City which my wife
21 and I love.

22 My experience includes serving
23 as partner in charge of the original
24 Master Plan for Fairmount Park, the urban
25 design and planning for Liberty Place,

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2 the successful HOPE VI application for
3 the Mill Creek Public Housing in West
4 Philadelphia. WRT has a national
5 reputation which has allowed me to learn
6 how other cities plan for open space and
7 recreation, including the national
8 award-winning Richmond Virginia Canal
9 Walk, the Kansas City FOCUS Plan and
10 other urban redevelopment assignments
11 throughout the country. WRT has recently
12 worked with Penn Praxis in preparing the
13 Delaware Riverfront Master Plan and is
14 now working on the Trinity River
15 redevelopment in Central Dallas, which
16 combines public open space with adjacent
17 private development and helps pay for the
18 capital improvements associated with the
19 park.

20 I began my career after
21 graduation from the University of
22 Pennsylvania in architecture and city
23 planning in 1967, and during five years
24 with the City Planning Commission of
25 Philadelphia, I was appointed the first

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2 Director of Area Planning, which assists
3 community groups in planning and
4 development issues. At WRT, I have
5 continued my interest in community
6 involvement, including assignments with
7 PHA for communities in West Philadelphia,
8 North Philadelphia and the Northeast. In
9 recent years, I have become active in the
10 Urban Land Institute. I'm presently the
11 program Chairman for the 1,100-member
12 Philadelphia District Council. I'm a
13 fellow in the American Institute of
14 Architects. I'm also a member of the
15 Delaware Valley "Smart Growth" jury and
16 have just left the CPDC Board, where I
17 served for 20 years.

18 My availability for work on the
19 Commission has increased with my
20 retirement as a principal at WRT. My
21 most recent assignments include directing
22 the Community Charette for the redesign
23 of the South Street Bridge, teaching a
24 workshop in community planning at the
25 Graduate School of Design, and completing

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2 the Master Plan for the Capital of
3 Illinois in Springfield. The workshop
4 requires contact with community watershed
5 planning for Upper Darby, waterfront
6 redevelopment in Tacony, community
7 revitalization in Strawberry Mansion.
8 And the Illinois assignment is my last
9 project at WRT, where I have been a
10 partner since 1981.

11 Now, my interest in
12 redevelopment of Philadelphia parks and
13 recreation includes ULI programs, which
14 link open space and development. So
15 issues like the Fox Chase expansion on
16 parkland and the community opposition
17 suggest that there is a need to blend
18 public and private investment such as the
19 successful cooperation between Johns
20 Hopkins in Baltimore where WRT prepared
21 campus plans in cooperation with the city
22 and adjacent neighborhoods.

23 Philadelphia has a beautiful
24 park system and recreation centers, which
25 need investment in maintenance and

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2 security. In times like today's budget
3 crisis, a creative approach which
4 involves community groups and private
5 development should be one of the tasks of
6 the new Commission on Parks and
7 Recreation, and I would like to serve on
8 this Commission.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
10 for your testimony.

11 MR. ISARD: Good afternoon.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
13 afternoon.

14 MR. ISARD: My name is Brendan
15 Isard. I'm a Center City resident and I
16 am the principal owner of Waverly Green,
17 LLC. It's a LEED construction and
18 sustainability firm.

19 The Parks and Recreation
20 Commission is facing a unique opportunity
21 as our society becomes increasingly
22 environmentally conscious. The
23 Commission will be required to establish
24 policies that will promote the
25 preservation and conservation of our

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2 existing natural resources and educate
3 the public on environmentally responsible
4 stewardship practices. Given the City of
5 Philadelphia's current financial
6 restraints, it will require the
7 appropriate experience, leadership and
8 commitment to accomplish this goal.

9 As a member of the Parks and
10 Recreation Commission, I would take
11 measures to ensure that the City would
12 offer the most cost-effective programs
13 and services to its community. My
14 background in finance, management and
15 organizational development make me an
16 ideal candidate for this position. My
17 professional experience in financial
18 planning has taught me the importance of
19 budgeting and fund allocation. My
20 communication and negotiation credentials
21 give me the ability required to make this
22 Commission both effective and efficient.
23 Further, my professional accreditation as
24 a LEED-AP would be an invaluable asset to
25 the organization, as it provides me with

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2 a wealth of understanding in
3 environmentally responsible building
4 policies and procedures. However, my
5 greatest asset to the organization is my
6 commitment to developing the Parks and
7 Recreation Commission into a viable
8 program that will serve as a paradigm for
9 other public programs for our city.

10 The improvement and progress of
11 the City of Philadelphia hinders upon its
12 ability to provide services and programs
13 that encourage growth, enrichment and
14 health. These elements are necessary if
15 the City is to strive and expand. Having
16 an efficiently run Parks and Recreation
17 program that provides such activities is
18 essential at this time. During this time
19 of economic crisis, cities need to
20 restructure their priorities and
21 commitments, while keeping focus on their
22 most valued assets, its residents. We
23 cannot afford to diminish our investment
24 in our people as such programs offer
25 invaluable alternatives and resources to

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2 our communities.

3 The City of Philadelphia has
4 historically been recognized as having
5 one of the country's largest and best
6 park systems, and our recreation programs
7 are a proven deterrent from destructive
8 behavior. The continuity of these
9 programs will require leadership from
10 those who understand the balance of
11 social, educational, environmental and
12 financial boundaries. I possess the
13 knowledge and experience necessary to
14 achieve the goals set forth by the
15 Commission, and my inclusion will be one
16 piece of the equation for future success.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
19 for your testimony.

20 You gentlemen are free to
21 leave, unless my colleagues have any
22 questions or comments.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: My only
24 comment is that I'm impressed. I
25 continue to be impressed with the quality

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2 of applicants that we have. I don't
3 know, but I'm pretty sure it's going to
4 put us in a very, very precarious
5 situation with this kind of talent.
6 We're the kind of folk and body that
7 don't like talent to leave. So we may
8 devise something to keep it around.

9 (Thank you.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
11 gentlemen.

12 You may approach the witness
13 table, Eric I-F-F-I-G, Voffee Jabateh,
14 Lavone Jackson, Omar Jefferson. They
15 shall be followed by Dean Jerrehian,
16 Lurline Jones, Bernard Kanefsky.

17 (Witnesses approached witness
18 table.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
20 state your name for the record and
21 proceed with your testimony.

22 MR. JEFFERSON-NELSON: I do
23 have written copies for you.

24 Good afternoon. My name is
25 Omar Jefferson-Nelson, a resident of the

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2 Francisville section of the City. And,
3 first of all, I'd like to thank you for
4 the opportunity today and just commend
5 you on supporting this initiative. It's
6 just awesome. Thank you.

7 Through my personal experience,
8 education and professional experience, I
9 believe myself to have acquired the skill
10 sets needed to meet the qualifications in
11 attaining a position on the Philadelphia
12 Commission on Parks and Recreation.

13 First of all, as an individual
14 who was born in North Philadelphia, I've
15 had the privilege of firsthand use of the
16 Parks and Recreation system. From
17 remembering the hot summer days when my
18 older brother allowed me to accompany him
19 to the public pools through competing in
20 high school cross country races in
21 Fairmount Park, I have developed a
22 passion for the benefits and impact that
23 an efficient Parks and Recreation system
24 may have on a young, impressionable mind.

25 My experiences as an NCAA

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2 Division I track and field athlete while
3 completing my studies at Louisiana State
4 University, as well as being a personal
5 trainer, has allowed me to have a unique
6 perspective that I feel qualifies me as a
7 person whom, like many Philadelphia
8 youth, has had the opportunity to aspire
9 to certain goals while also pursuing
10 athletics and developing my talents to
11 greater levels. Also, the education that
12 I received in chemical engineering and
13 chemistry has helped me to prepare myself
14 in understanding the potential
15 environmental impact of an efficient
16 Parks and Recreation system.

17 My experiences and my level of
18 commitment to community and volunteerism
19 is another reason which further qualifies
20 me to serve on the Commission. Since
21 moving back to Philadelphia after
22 college, I have continued to become more
23 involved in my community, from races for
24 specific causes to my participation with
25 the Fairmount Community Development

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2 Corporation and neighborhood clean-up
3 days. I am also an active Board member
4 and currently the Public Relations
5 Chairperson for the Aldersgate Youth
6 Services Bureau, a non-profit which
7 operates out of Montgomery County and
8 serves Philadelphia in placement of
9 foster care children.

10 These are several items for
11 which I have developed a passion and
12 recognize how a well-developed Parks and
13 Recreation system could both receive and
14 generate benefit.

15 Finally, my professional
16 experience in working for a company like
17 Johnson & Johnson, which recognizes and
18 supports employees' efforts to be active
19 members of their respective communities,
20 has allowed me the opportunity to fill a
21 level of support which increases my
22 personal confidence in my ability to be
23 dedicated if I were fortunate enough to
24 be appointed to the Commission.

25 Other benefits which add more

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2 value to my qualifications are due to the
3 daily task in which I currently
4 participate professionally in the
5 consumer healthcare industry. My career
6 has helped to develop my skills through
7 managing people, budgets, projects,
8 contractors and timelines. I currently
9 analyze and plan for a business which has
10 produced worldwide sales of over \$500
11 million annually. This requires me to
12 work very closely with a team of diverse,
13 talented individuals to ensure the
14 continuity of our business.

15 The skill sets which I have
16 been fortunate enough to develop from
17 these experiences and those previously
18 mentioned have made me qualified for a
19 position on the Philadelphia Commission
20 on Parks and Recreation. Your
21 consideration for such a position is
22 greatly appreciated.

23 And if I may add -- first of
24 all, I'd like to thank you again, because
25 this has truly been a great opportunity

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2 and just this experience has been just
3 awesome, as I said already, but I'd like
4 to also just commend everyone else who
5 has spoken today, has inspired me as an
6 individual, and I just had to say that to
7 everyone who was here. Your testimonies
8 have been awesome, and as a person who
9 maybe could be considered an optimist,
10 but with a strong belief in community, I
11 feel like just knowing that we have this
12 type of talent in the City of
13 Philadelphia, it just lends itself to
14 speaking of how great this city really
15 is.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Ditto.

17 Ditto.

18 Please, sir.

19 MR. JABATEH: Good afternoon.

20 My name is Voffee Jabateh. I'm
21 originally from West Africa. I am the
22 Executive Director for the African
23 Cultural Alliance in Southwest
24 Philadelphia. I'm engaged in community
25 development. I am also part of the

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2 Mayor's Commission on African and
3 Caribbean Affairs. We engage in children
4 programming and arts and culture
5 education. We have developed several
6 festivals in the City of Philadelphia.
7 One of those festivals is the Echoes of
8 Africa, which is currently being headed
9 by Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell. Along
10 with Councilwoman Blackwell, we have also
11 developed other festivals on Chester
12 Avenue, the Chester Avenue corridor.

13 My organization serves several
14 African and Caribbean immigrants, and
15 here today I bring diversity to be
16 included on this Commission to represent
17 the several thousands of African and
18 Caribbean immigrant who currently
19 consider this city their home.

20 Professionally, I'm a social
21 worker. I have a Master's degree from
22 Temple University, and I have coordinated
23 several artistic events here in the City
24 of Philadelphia. We are currently the
25 owner and the producer of the African

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2 Festival at Penn's Landing. We brought
3 last year world-renowned Caribbean artist
4 Maxi Priest. We will repeat that this
5 year.

6 Our inclusion on this
7 Commission will be focused on -- will
8 stimulate focus on artistic programming
9 and recreation development within the
10 system. Because this is -- this
11 invitation was meant to bring
12 commissioners together to serve as
13 Commissioner for Park and Recreation, I
14 must admonish that you know very well,
15 Councilwoman Blondell Brown and Curtis
16 Jones and Darrell Clarke, that a great
17 city without great parks and a recreation
18 program is not bound to succeed.

19 Here today, as I testified
20 before you or as I present my credentials
21 for inclusion on this Commission, I hope
22 that you will consider the several
23 thousand African and Caribbean immigrant
24 who are now becoming part of your global
25 strategy, the global Philadelphia

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2 strategy to include immigrant in its
3 operation.

4 In conclusion, I want to
5 emphasize that as we begin to develop
6 Chester Avenue, we strongly believe that
7 the Chester Avenue and Southwest
8 Philadelphia area where we reside, the
9 part of the City where we reside, require
10 development. As we have moved from one
11 desperate situation to a more promising
12 situation in Southwest Philadelphia, we
13 want to be included in your attempt to
14 develop a great city.

15 Thank you very much for
16 allowing me the opportunity to be
17 included in this process, and I'm honored
18 to once be a refugee running from
19 desperate situation and sitting before
20 you vying for a valuable, valuable place
21 on Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
22 Board.

23 Thank you very much for your
24 opportunity.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're

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2 very welcome, and thank you for your
3 perspective.

4 Good afternoon.

5 MR. JACKSON: Good afternoon
6 at-large Councilwoman and Chairperson
7 Ms. Blondell Brown Reynolds, 4th District
8 Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr., and 5th
9 District Council Mr. Darrell Clarke. My
10 name is Lavone Andre Jackson. I'm not
11 going to get into my professional life
12 unless I have time at the end. I'd like
13 to get into my testimony so you would
14 know the knowledge and what I'm bringing
15 to the table.

16 I believe in myself, and I
17 always worked as a team player. This is
18 the type of attitude this Commission will
19 need to submit ideals and suggestions for
20 the Mayor and Council to review. I have
21 worked with several members of Council
22 reelection committee. I have worked as a
23 committeeman and appointed by the late
24 Mr. Samuel Evans as an Admission Council
25 Representative working with children,

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2 helping them to achieve a higher goal,
3 assist residents in filing their concerns
4 in various areas of Philadelphia. My
5 intention is to submit ideals and
6 suggestions on the following: How to
7 bring revenue to Fairmount Park; how we
8 can use the Mann Center year round
9 instead of just summer use; how we can
10 establish employment under the Police
11 Athletic League and submit projects to
12 the five professional organizations which
13 we have here in Philadelphia - the
14 Eagles, the Flyers, the Phillies, arena
15 football, Sixers and the Wings. These
16 organizations are looking for a way to
17 help in the communities in which their
18 fans come from, and PALs is the way to
19 obtain funding for the non-profit
20 organization, which is tax deductible.
21 So by putting PALs in every recreation
22 facility, we can establish a citywide fan
23 club. This is what the professional
24 world calls "one hand helping the other,"
25 and obtaining a tax credit in doing it.

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2 Skills and labor: Here in
3 Philadelphia we have a lot of
4 ex-offenders that are plumbers,
5 carpenters, electricians, landscapers and
6 painters. It is time for the leaders of
7 this city to take all of the residents
8 back instead of letting the talent they
9 have go to waste, when we already have
10 the resources in which we can use in
11 order to use their skills without
12 affecting the positions in which our
13 Commission have. This is how second
14 chances are given to those that want
15 them. We all know there will be
16 applicants that don't have that problem.

17 Have a representative from the
18 Park Commission's staff, Council and the
19 Mayor Office to meet with Disney World in
20 Florida or Dorney Park to survey our Park
21 and consider putting a mini park within
22 Fairmount Park, which will bring jobs,
23 revenue from the entire world. Also, if
24 this suggestion is reviewed, we will want
25 this corporation also to be a part of

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2 PAL's league so that we can keep our
3 people working.

4 I would like to submit to the
5 Commission a suggestion for the Mayor and
6 Council, the first Mayor-Council Almanac
7 of the present Administration and the
8 past Mayor, Council, commissioner,
9 police, firemen, democratic committee,
10 secretaries, et cetera. This is a book
11 that will sell, but let it come under
12 PALs for tax purposes for those
13 individuals who will like to sponsor the
14 suggestion.

15 My closing statement: Plans
16 should have a blueprint of dignity,
17 belief and a principle to achieve with
18 opportunities to be the best at whatever
19 you are, and a commitment to beauty, love
20 and justice for everybody. Never lose
21 your respect for justice involved with
22 leading and never giving up on the people
23 you represent, because they look for your
24 leadership to build, learn and organize
25 the realization of brotherly love toward

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2 each other. If you can't run, walk. If
3 you can't walk, keep moving within this
4 room. There's generations of love,
5 respect and leadership that many
6 residents, students and children are not
7 aware of, and with today's leadership,
8 it's an obligation for the knowledge to
9 be placed in a first Mayor-Council
10 Historic Almanac of Philadelphia so the
11 residents and the future leaders of the
12 City government can see it was a struggle
13 before this recession for all politicians
14 to obtain a position of the City of
15 Philadelphia.

16 And I made that statement
17 because our children need more than just
18 to go to Fairmount Park for relaxation
19 and recreation. Education is a big part
20 of becoming a Councilperson or secretary
21 or anything in life, and our recreation
22 facilities all over the City, City
23 Council need people on that Commission
24 that will submit ideas that could be
25 approved citywide, not just for one

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2 section -- for a section that you are
3 volunteering your time in. It should be
4 for all sections, because all people in
5 the City of Philadelphia have concerns.
6 Their concerns are the same. And Police
7 Athletic League, PALs, is one way of
8 helping the City get more confidence
9 within the Police Department, because the
10 children will stay inside, open up their
11 concerns to them, and also helping them
12 to find criminals within our cities.

13 If we don't start educating our
14 kids at our recreation facilities with a
15 safe environment, they will never achieve
16 the goals that they want to be. Kids is
17 more than just athletes. Kids is more
18 than just someone that want to go to the
19 park, to have barbecue, to sit down at
20 the tables.

21 And also in closing, we cannot
22 forget about the senior citizens. We
23 must have a place in Fairmount Park for
24 the senior citizens to be able to play
25 horseshoes, cricket, et cetera.

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2 And as far as my professional
3 background, I ran for United States
4 Congress in 1978. I'm presently an
5 active member of the Mayor Volunteer
6 Coordinators --

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
8 seconds, sir.

9 MR. JACKSON: -- Council
10 Advisor. That concludes my testimony.
11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Councilman
13 Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Mr. Nelson,
15 your experience in track and field, did
16 it come through a Recreation Department
17 experience?

18 MR. JEFFERSON-NELSON: It
19 actually came through high school.
20 Ultimately I got to college through high
21 school, but I participated in summer
22 track and field recreational programs.
23 Marcus Foster Stadium is the first place
24 I --

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: What team

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2 did you run for?

3 MR. JEFFERSON-NELSON: I
4 actually ran for Olney and I also ran for
5 a team over in Camden, New Jersey also.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Which one?

7 MR. JEFFERSON-NELSON: Camden
8 City, and Rising Star. So that was my
9 entry into track and field, and then
10 through high school, I eventually went to
11 college.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'll try
13 real hard not to prejudice myself since I
14 was a Mallory track coach at one point,
15 but go ahead.

16 MR. JEFFERSON-NELSON: Okay.
17 Well, I appreciate that.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: But Marcus
19 Foster, I spent a lot of time in there
20 with the Recreation Department, and
21 that's why I asked.

22 MR. JEFFERSON-NELSON: That was
23 the first place --

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm glad to
25 hear that it resulted in a positive

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2 experience for you, both in college and
3 beyond.

4 MR. JEFFERSON-NELSON: Yes.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: One other
6 question. Is the African and Caribbean
7 group also responsible for the Caribana
8 Festival out near Parkside Avenue? Are
9 you involved with that?

10 MR. JABATEH: I work along with
11 Donna and Dan on that festival, but I'm
12 specifically involved with the Millennium
13 of Music, which is hosted on Chester
14 Avenue, and Echoes of Africa, which I'm a
15 founding member of, and currently we also
16 have the slot which used to be -- I think
17 it was managed by Ms. Cox, Barbara Cox.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Barbara
19 Daniels Cox.

20 MR. JABATEH: Yeah, Barbara
21 Daniels. And that slot was given to us
22 to specifically manage as the African
23 Festival. Last year was a very huge
24 success. And we just doing a whole lot
25 of other issues that has to do with arts

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2 and culture and children program in the
3 City.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just think
5 diversity is to our city as seasoning is
6 to food. Without it, it would be bland.
7 So I'm thankful that you have these
8 concerts, and particularly the one on
9 Parkside Avenue I look forward to every
10 year. It's so rich in color, so rich in
11 music, and everybody seems to be having a
12 good time out there, and it just adds
13 another dimension to our city.

14 Finally, I'd be interested at
15 another time, because the Chairman's time
16 is precious, your ideas about using the
17 Mann Music Center year round. So I took
18 note of that. So if you could talk to my
19 staff person, Ms. Cephas over there, I'd
20 appreciate your ideas on that as a Board
21 member of the Mann Music Center.

22 Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
24 gentlemen. Thank you all very, very much
25 for your testimony.

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2 Dean Jerrehian, Lurline Jones,
3 Bernard Kanefsky. And the next set of
4 witnesses shall be Gerald Kaufman, John
5 Kelly, III, Renee Kirby.

6 William Kennedy, if you're
7 here, you're welcome to join us, please.

8 Sir, you are welcome to take
9 the witness table.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So I'll
13 repeat the next panel just so you're
14 ready and in place. Gerald Kaufman, John
15 Kelly, III, William Kennedy and Renee
16 Kirby.

17 MR. KAUFMAN: I'm Gerald
18 Kaufman.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very well.
20 If you have testimony, we'd love to have
21 it on the front end before you proceed.

22 Good afternoon, everyone.
23 Please state your name for the record and
24 you're welcome to start on my extreme
25 left. State your name for the record.

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2 and it still connects very much to what
3 we do at Awbury.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
5 for that history.

6 MR. KAUFFMAN: But, more
7 important than my work -- well, maybe not
8 more important, but as important as my
9 work at Awbury, I was an organization
10 development consultant before I got to
11 Awbury, and most of my clients were
12 non-profit organizations, some City
13 government work, and the skill and the
14 learning that I have is how to sort of
15 help people deal with conflict and
16 divisions, and it seems to me that this
17 Commission, with bringing two
18 organizations together with some
19 different cultures, is going to need that
20 skill, and I just want to put out that I
21 bring that skill.

22 Our vision at Awbury -- well,
23 our mission is to connect an urban
24 community to nature and history. A third
25 of our Board has to live within two miles

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2 of Awbury. We're very, very focused on
3 our Germantown and West Oak Lane
4 community.

5 The vision is all around
6 sustainability. Everything we do --
7 almost everything we do focuses on
8 sustainability, and it seems to me that
9 this new merger, that the vision of that
10 should also be sustainability in every
11 aspect. We talk about sustainability of
12 the earth, to the extent we can impact
13 it, and sustainability of the people
14 using our services are the people we
15 interact with.

16 So I said we're 55 acres
17 divided by Washington Lane, 22 across
18 Washington Lane from our main campus, if
19 you call it a campus, has really become
20 urban farm land. Weavers Way, we rented
21 an acre and a half. We have a children's
22 garden. We have an apprentice garden --
23 we have an apprentice program for 18- to
24 24-year-olds teaching landscape in
25 horticulture, and now teaching ecological

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2 landscape, such as rain gardens, and
3 we're also very much involved with storm
4 water management with the Water
5 Department. We have an inlet on
6 Washington Lane that the Water Department
7 put in, and then the water -- the
8 rainwater comes into our ground and we
9 clean it and send it back to our ponds
10 and wetlands. And the Water Department
11 is about to put a new one in, and we are
12 going to be -- we have a new inlet coming
13 on Washington Lane. So we're going to
14 take water off Washington Lane, clean it,
15 keep in our wetlands and ponds and storm
16 water management. We're very involved
17 with the Water Department in this. As a
18 matter of fact, there is -- the Water
19 Department, under their auspices, we have
20 Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed
21 Partnership. That's a mouthful. And the
22 purpose through that whole watershed is
23 to make people aware of storm water
24 management, to clean up the creeks and
25 the streams. And it meets at Awbury.

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2 I'm President of that Board. I might be
3 Chairman of that Board. I never know
4 which my title is. So, as I say, we're
5 very intricate to that.

6 We're also very connected -- in
7 terms of the Recreation Department, we
8 don't do work with them, but we have a
9 mini recreation center at Awbury. We
10 have about 5,000 kids a year who come
11 there, and they really do enormous and
12 fun things, but incredible education that
13 they go through. And we're very
14 connected to Ogontz Avenue Revitalization
15 Corporation. So we're doing a lot of
16 street tree planting -- time? Okay.
17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Fifteen
19 seconds.

20 MR. KAUFFMAN: Let me see what
21 else I want to do.

22 We've done a lot of street tree
23 planting in Center City with the Center
24 City residents. Urban farming is now a
25 big thing. I talked about that. I'm

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2 just reading some notes. And there I am.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
4 very much, and thank you again for the
5 history lesson.

6 Good afternoon.

7 MS. JONES: Good afternoon to
8 the Honorable Councilpersons. I feel
9 that I really understand the statement
10 when you say you have the patience of
11 Jobe.

12 I'm a real doer. I like to get
13 my hands dirty. But I'm Lurline Jones.
14 However, I would like to introduce myself
15 as being Philly born, Philly bred and
16 when I die, I'll be Philly dead. I'd
17 also like to call myself a stakeholder in
18 this wonderful city. I was educated in
19 the Philadelphia school system. After
20 receiving a Board of Education
21 scholarship to attend college, I returned
22 home to teach. Last year, I retired from
23 the School District of Philadelphia after
24 42 years of service as a teacher, coach,
25 athletic director and department

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2 chairperson. During the summers, I
3 worked as a day camp director and as an
4 employment and career teacher for the
5 Department of Recreation.

6 I also co-founded a non-profit
7 organization for female athletes,
8 Developmental Basketball League,
9 Incorporated, better known as DBL, where
10 Mantua and the James A. Wright Recreation
11 Center was a base of operation for over
12 25 years. The girls were able to be
13 recruited for college due to the clinics,
14 the camps, shootouts and leagues that
15 were conducted there and at various other
16 recreation centers. And as you know,
17 that when girls get involved in
18 athletics, we know that they have a
19 benefit, a social benefit as well as a
20 health benefit.

21 Since retirement, I've been
22 involved with the American Red Cross in
23 doing CPR, and I maybe do CPR for
24 churches and non-profit organizations and
25 organizations that serve children whose

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2 parents are incarcerated.

3 If given the opportunity to
4 serve on the Commission, I feel that I
5 can bring a creative and a positive
6 outlook. I have experience and expertise
7 in implementing innovative programs that
8 would be beneficial to the citizens of
9 Philadelphia. Having been a successful
10 coach and organizing fundraising events
11 and being frugal in initiating programs
12 and events, that is a part of me.

13 I am a committed citizen with
14 the capability and capacity to serve on
15 the Commission and get the job done. As
16 separate departments, Recreation and
17 Fairmount Parks have served Philadelphia
18 well. Now that they are combined, they
19 will be a top-notch entity and a model
20 for the rest of the country.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
23 for your testimony and your vote of
24 optimism. That's what this goal is
25 about.

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2 Please.

3 MR. KANEFSKY: Good afternoon,
4 Madam Chairperson, Committee members. My
5 name is Bernard Kanefsky, but I'm known
6 to everyone as Bud. I was born and
7 raised in the Feltonville section of
8 Philadelphia. I earned a BS in
9 accounting at Temple University, and
10 since 1987, I have a real estate brokers
11 license.

12 My wife and I and our two
13 daughters moved to Lower Moreland
14 Township, Montgomery County in 1970,
15 where I became involved in the community
16 politics. I was elected to six four-year
17 terms, or 24 years, as a Commissioner in
18 the township. During that time, I served
19 four years as President of the Board and
20 oversaw the building of a new \$13 million
21 library. For a ten-year period, I was
22 Chairman of the Parks and Recreation
23 Department. During that time, we built
24 three new baseball fields and six new
25 soccer fields, set up a batting cage and

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2 set up a lunchroom run by volunteers.

3 I also served on the Land and
4 Development and Public Works Committees.
5 For eight years, I was a trustee on the
6 Pennypack Watershed Association Board,
7 where I was involved in saving over 150
8 acres of farmland to be preserved for
9 open space.

10 In the year 2000, I was elected
11 President of the Montgomery County
12 Association of Township Commissioners,
13 which is comprised of 14 townships.

14 In 1985, I was elected
15 President of the Philadelphia Council of
16 B'nai B'rith with a membership of 5,000
17 members.

18 In 1995, as B'nai B'rith
19 District 3 President, I was responsible
20 for four states, Pennsylvania, New
21 Jersey, Delaware and West Virginia, with
22 over 20,000 members. I also served for
23 ten years on the B'nai B'rith Summer Camp
24 Pearlman Board, which serves hundreds of
25 teenagers every summer and where I

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2 personally raised \$50,000 for three new
3 buildings.

4 In 2003 when I retired from the
5 Board, my wife and I moved to a
6 condominium on State Road in the
7 Torresdale section of Philadelphia, where
8 I am now a member of the Condo
9 Association Board. With my education and
10 leadership background, especially in
11 parks and recreation, I believe I would
12 be an asset to the advisory Commission on
13 Parks and Recreation. I sincerely hope
14 my application will be accepted.

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

17 Councilman Jones, any
18 questions, comments, observations?

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Particularly
20 the Arboretum, every time I go in there,
21 my blood pressure equalizes and goes
22 down, but particularly I'm interested in
23 the rainwater runoff pools that you train
24 people to do and I wanted to know if in
25 fact you had worked with the Water

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2 Department at all, because there is a
3 massive plan to --

4 MR. KAUFFMAN: We're working
5 closely with them on all aspects, as I
6 said, with the TTF partnership,
7 Tookany/Tacony. The head of Office of
8 Watershed is Vice-President of the Board.
9 I'm President of the Board. They're
10 going to be putting in a -- they're going
11 to be spending about 300,000 at Awbury to
12 put in a new rain garden to take the
13 rainwater off Washington Lane.

14 We're partners in lots of
15 different ways. And they're very
16 interested in our training program, the
17 18- to 24-year-olds, and someone from the
18 Water Department came out and gave a
19 presentation recently about how to -- on
20 their whole green streets. You know
21 about their green streets program?

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. I'm
23 Chair of Transportation and Public
24 Utilities, so we're reviewing that.

25 MR. KAUFFMAN: So you know.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: I guess a
3 couple of quick questions. How expensive
4 are they to do and --

5 MR. KAUFFMAN: How expensive
6 are what? I'm sorry.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are they to
8 install, on average.

9 MR. KAUFFMAN: Well, I can't
10 tell you on average. I know we spent on
11 the first one, we got a grant from DEP at
12 about \$45,000.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Second quick
14 question, because I don't want to --

15 MR. KAUFFMAN: But the new one
16 is about \$300,000 to \$400,000.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: And the
18 other thing is, by way of insects, do
19 they attract mosquitos or anything? I
20 mean, as we start to look at multiplying
21 the numbers, are we in fact creating a --

22 MR. KAUFFMAN: Well, so far
23 not. The City comes out, the vector -- I
24 call him Mr. Vector -- comes out a couple
25 times a summer and checks our ponds to

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2 see, and so far he's found none.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm all for
4 the ecology, except for mosquitos.

5 MR. KAUFFMAN: Well, so long as
6 the water is moving, I understand. We
7 have a bird pond in another part and we
8 have it electrified and the water always
9 is moving as a way of keeping mosquitos
10 away.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
13 all very, very much.

14 John Kelly, III, Renee Kirby,
15 Christine Knapp, Adam Krom, Kimberly
16 Labno. Please feel free to approach the
17 witness table and/or the back.

18 (Witnesses approached witness
19 table.)

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Please begin
21 the testimony. State your name.

22 MR. KELLY: My name is John
23 Kelly. I'm a resident of the Chestnut
24 Hill neighborhood. Good afternoon,
25 Councilwoman, Councilmen.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

3 afternoon.

4 MR. KELLY: Thank you for your
5 time.

6 I just want to start off with a
7 little personal background on my
8 experiences with the Park. The Park has
9 been a vital and important part of my
10 life, from my father teaching me to row,
11 to my teaching my son and my daughter to
12 row, to running races in Belmont Plateau
13 and to swimming at Devils Pool on the
14 Wissahickon Creek. So it's been a great
15 time. And I see my current service as a
16 Board member of the Fairmount Park
17 Conservancy as a way of paying back, and
18 if you shall choose to appoint me to this
19 Commission, likewise be a way of paying
20 back for the great benefits that the Park
21 has provided me in my life.

22 As far as my credentials, I
23 would like to point to my experience as a
24 Board member and President of Vesper Boat
25 Club over the past 25 years in various

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2 roles over the time. Vesper Boat Club is
3 a tenant or occupant of the Park, part of
4 Boathouse Row, part of a wonderful
5 community in the Park, the rowing
6 community, and we all believe very much
7 in the vitality of the Park and
8 protecting our home there.

9 Also, my professional work as a
10 municipal bond professional gives me
11 experience with city budgets, city
12 finance, as well as public-private
13 partnerships, which is, I think, one of
14 the goals to help utilize the asset of
15 the Park without compromising its public
16 access, but finding ways to utilize the
17 Park assets to generate some revenue.
18 And I've seen in my career public-private
19 partnerships that work and some that
20 don't. So hopefully that experience
21 would be helpful in structuring good
22 programs.

23 Also on the environmental
24 mission, Fairmount Park is a vital
25 environmental asset to the Park, and I

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2 believe my experience -- one of my
3 volunteer activities as President of the
4 Prince Albert, II, of Monaco Foundation,
5 which is an international environmental
6 foundation, and hopefully that experience
7 will be helpful in that role as well.

8 Thank you for your time. And
9 if you shall choose me, it'd be a great
10 honor to serve on this Commission if you
11 should choose me.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. KENNEDY: Good afternoon,
14 ladies and gentlemen of City Council. My
15 name is William Kennedy. I am a lifelong
16 resident of Philadelphia. I have lived
17 in Swampoodle, Brewerytown, Hunting Park,
18 Northwood and I currently side in East
19 Torresdale. I retired from the
20 Philadelphia Fire Department in January
21 of 2008 after 34 years of service.
22 Believe me, I am enjoying my retirement
23 because it gives me a chance to do
24 something like this. I never thought I
25 would be sitting in front of Council.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's all
3 good.

4 MR. KENNEDY: Thank you for the
5 opportunity.

6 I have been a member of Glen
7 Foerd on the Delaware for 18 years and an
8 active volunteer for a number of years,
9 and since my retirement, I have been even
10 more active. Besides volunteering my
11 time and services for almost every event
12 held there -- and they do hold a lot -- I
13 am also on the Fundraising and Garden
14 Committees. In some areas I have begun
15 to show leadership and develop novel
16 approaches to individual problems.

17 I am a member of the East
18 Torresdale Civic Association. I have
19 increased my activity in this association
20 since retirement. In January of this
21 year, I was elected as Second
22 Vice-President.

23 Before being a firefighter, I
24 taught in high school for two years. I
25 received a BA from Temple University in

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2 1969 and went to graduate school there
3 for 18 credits. Between 1987 and '89, I
4 took seminar classes at Wharton night
5 school in health benefits. I served as
6 an elected trustee of Local 22
7 International Association of Firefighters
8 during those years. I sat on or chaired
9 numerous committees for the Local, almost
10 all having to do with finances. I have
11 been on Local 22's Medical Advisory Board
12 since 1999. The three of us on the Board
13 are entrusted with the fiscal well-being
14 of the health plan's prescription program
15 servicing 4,000 active and retired
16 firefighters and their families.

17 I became interested in this new
18 Commission when I saw the flyer
19 announcing it. Truthfully, I was very
20 angry that the citizens of Philadelphia
21 adopted the Charter change last November.
22 At that time, I thought that this change
23 was ill-advised. I still think so.
24 However, we have to live with what we
25 have.

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2 The Fairmount Park Commission
3 was a substantial buffer between the
4 Mayor and the many acres and properties
5 that the Commission controlled, and Mayor
6 Nutter has said several times that some
7 properties may have to be sold. I am
8 firmly opposed to any sale. As I state
9 in my application, a lease of some
10 property may be possible, or a conversion
11 such as Memorial Hall can be desirable.

12 It's actually a great
13 conversion. I went there the other week
14 with some grandchildren and I loved it.
15 I have been going into that building --
16 having been a firefighter in West
17 Philadelphia, I have been going in that
18 building many times, and it was
19 delapidated then. They've done a
20 wonderful job with it.

21 The point is, I'm not against
22 all change.

23 My experience that I would
24 bring to the Commission is at ground
25 level. In 1982, the local East

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2 Torresdale residents saved the Glen Foerd
3 Mansion from demolition. The Lutheran
4 Church was going to sell the mansion and
5 its 17 acres to a private developer, who
6 intended to erect 440 condominiums. Not
7 only would the mansion be destroyed, but
8 a wonderful neighborhood would have been
9 negatively altered. The untrained and
10 inexperienced residents mounted a
11 successful court challenge against the
12 sale. The court eventually awarded
13 stewardship of Glen Foerd to the local
14 residents and the Fairmount Park
15 Commission. The official name of this
16 controlling group of citizens was the
17 Glen Foerd Conservation Corporation. The
18 Fairmount Park Commission rarely did much
19 to help maintain the mansion and grounds.
20 The Glen Foerd Conservation Corporation
21 kept the estate alive through fundraisers
22 that are modest by today's standards.
23 They learned the hard way with dedication
24 with recruitment of like-minded citizens
25 with uncountable hours of toil and they

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2 eventually increased revenues through
3 corporate contracts, federal, state and
4 private grants.

5 Glen Foerd is the last public
6 mansion on the Delaware in Philadelphia.
7 We used to have many in the 19th and 20th
8 centuries, and they are gone. Therein
9 lies a lesson. We have many acres in the
10 Fairmount Park system. I don't want some
11 future volunteer to say that they are
12 gone, that we never learned that lesson.

13 By the way, this book is Lights
14 Along the Delaware. It illustrates all
15 of the mansions that were along the
16 Delaware, and if you would like to have a
17 tour of Glen Foerd, it could be arranged
18 through Anthony Radwanski, who is the
19 President of Glen Foerd Conservation
20 Corporation, and while you're there, we
21 will open the gift shop and for \$12 we
22 will sell you this book.

23 Thank you very much for your
24 time and your consideration.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

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2 Good afternoon.

3 MS. KIRBY: Good afternoon,
4 Madam Chair and members of the Parks and
5 Recreation Committee. My name is Renee
6 Kirby. Thank you for the opportunity to
7 submit my application for consideration
8 to serve as a member of the Parks and
9 Recreation Commission.

10 When I started my recreation
11 career in the early 1980's, I knew I
12 wanted to work with children and adults
13 with disabilities. Starting out, I was
14 very excited about the possibilities of
15 engaging special populations in lifelong
16 recreation and leisure activities.

17 I was guided by the beliefs of
18 my profession that access and
19 participation in recreation has the same
20 physical and psychological benefits for
21 all people.

22 While working with special
23 populations has always been rewarding to
24 me, it was the challenges to obtain
25 equitable resources and physical access

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2 to recreation services for this group
3 that became the driving force behind many
4 of the innovative programs highlighted on
5 my resume.

6 Today, it is exciting to
7 imagine the possibilities again of having
8 a well-integrated Recreation and Parks
9 system, committed to promoting diversity
10 and inclusion as part of its core values.
11 For people with disabilities, these
12 values usher in a new era of opportunity
13 for them to become fully engaged in their
14 communities through the participation of
15 lifelong recreation activities.

16 I would like nothing more than
17 to use my knowledge and experience in
18 recreation to help support the Mayor's
19 overall vision for the City and its
20 citizens by joining the Recreation and
21 Parks Commission.

22 Some of my credentials include
23 establishing and developing the first
24 intercollegiate wheelchair basketball
25 team at Temple University and

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2 establishing wheelchair sports within the
3 Department of Recreation, working 12
4 years at the Philadelphia Carousel House.

5 I thank you very much for this
6 opportunity to present my testimony.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
8 you all very much. And, again, just the
9 three of you represent the beautiful
10 diversity and the mix of testifiers who
11 have come before us, and I think most
12 encouraging for me is to know that we had
13 a disbeliever who has become a believer
14 in the possibility. So thank you for
15 coming to testify.

16 MR. KENNEDY: We have to make
17 it work.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes,
19 indeed.

20 Thank you all.

21 Please. Christine Knapp, Adam
22 Krom, Kimberly Labno. And the next
23 panel, Patrick Lamb, Robert Lambert,
24 Anthony Langford. You're welcome to sit
25 in the black chairs.

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2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
5 state your name for the record and
6 proceed with your testimony.

7 MS. KNAPP: My name is
8 Christine Knapp. As my professional
9 career, I'm the Director of Outreach for
10 Penn Future. For the past eight years,
11 my specialty has been working within the
12 field of environmental education, policy
13 and advocacy.

14 I have a deep understanding of
15 the environmental issues in Pennsylvania
16 and in Philadelphia in particular due to
17 my role as the coordinator for the Next
18 Great City initiative. Next Great City
19 has united 110 City-based organizations
20 together to support a ten-point
21 environmental agenda for Philadelphia.
22 One recommendation within that agenda was
23 to strengthen parks through increased
24 funding and reforming park leadership.
25 Because of our recommendation, I became a

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2 supporter of the merger of Parks and
3 Recreation and for the creation of this
4 particular Commission.

5 In my capacity as a Director of
6 Outreach, I'm also aware of best
7 practices in terms of use of parks and
8 open space from around the world, and I
9 also work daily on the -- with the threat
10 of global warming and impact that it will
11 have on cities such as Philadelphia and
12 the unique role that open space can play
13 in combatting the effects of global
14 warming.

15 As the Director of Outreach, I
16 often serve as the public face for my
17 organization and, therefore, I have
18 experience in presenting information to
19 various public audiences, whether it be
20 media, legislator or voters. Creating a
21 compelling message to do this is
22 critical. So I have the ability to craft
23 messages that speak to people about the
24 issues they care about in language they
25 use, and I'm also able to think

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2 creatively about new ways of getting
3 messages out to new audiences. I think
4 this skill will become helpful in getting
5 information about this Commission out to
6 the public and getting more people
7 engaged in the Parks and Recreation
8 system.

9 I also serve as a member of the
10 Mayor's Sustainability Advisory Board and
11 feel that I could serve as a liaison
12 between the larger sustainability
13 community and issues that they are
14 concerned with and this particular
15 Commission.

16 Besides my day job, I also
17 serve as a block captain and as the
18 Vice-President of the Passyunk Square
19 Civic Association, which is in South
20 Philadelphia. I work with my community
21 on making it cleaner, safer and a more
22 exciting place to live. We work with
23 zoning, town watch, trash and recycling
24 committee, education committee,
25 beautification committee and several

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2 others that work together to make our
3 neighborhood a desirable place to live
4 and work. And Philadelphia Magazine
5 recently listed our neighborhood as a
6 great place, partly due to the efforts of
7 the civic association.

8 Our neighborhood is blessed
9 with three parks and recreation systems:
10 Gold Star Park, Capitolo and Columbus.
11 Each of these sites has undergone
12 tremendous changes over the last several
13 years and each has served as a uniting
14 force for neighbors, both young and old.
15 My work with them has helped me to
16 realize how important open space is to
17 the quality of life and how important it
18 is as a community building tool.

19 If I were to be fortunate
20 enough to be on this Commission, there
21 are several areas I would like to focus
22 my attention, and one is on funding,
23 which we always know has been a problem
24 for the Park system. Since the City
25 budget is strained -- and we know today

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2 with the additional announcement from the
3 Mayor how strained it is -- I think we
4 need to consider some alternative sources
5 of funding for the Park system. Someone
6 previously mentioned public-private
7 partnerships, which I wholeheartedly
8 agree with. It should be taken advantage
9 of in an appropriate manner. And I think
10 we can also take advantage of the wealth
11 of information, people and resources that
12 exist in Philadelphia. We should bring
13 these new stakeholders to the table and
14 help them -- or bring them into helping
15 us to create new policies and regulations
16 to make it easier for non-profit groups
17 to collaborate and to find additional
18 resources for maintenance and other
19 issues.

20 Related to that, I know,
21 Councilman Jones, you're particularly
22 interested in the vast growing green jobs
23 movement, and I think that since
24 maintenance is a major issue for the
25 parks and being that there are existing

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2 green job training programs out there
3 that work on training people on how to do
4 horticultural maintenance, that this
5 would be a natural alliance of those two
6 issues and that we might consider ways of
7 tapping into some green job training
8 money to help maintain our parks.

9 In summary, I think I have
10 several strengths that would make me a
11 good candidate for this Commission,
12 again, the knowledge of environmental
13 issues in Philadelphia, from water and
14 air quality to storm water and waste
15 management. I also have a proven track
16 record of being able to quickly engage
17 community members on various issue
18 campaigns. I'm in regular contact with
19 those 110 organizations that are part of
20 Next Great City, and I have access to
21 thousands of residents through e-mail,
22 newspapers, public speaking engagements
23 and other events.

24 In my dual role as block
25 captain and Vice-President of Passyunk

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2 Square, I think I provide the
3 understanding of the role that parks and
4 recreation centers and open spaces play
5 in community building and can represent
6 the concerns of that neighborhood, which
7 represents a pretty diverse population of
8 over 8,000 people.

9 I want to thank you again for
10 this opportunity, and I'd like to leave
11 with a parting sort of open-ended
12 question, which I've just been really
13 impressed with the amount of people that
14 have applied and the talent that has been
15 here, so my question would be is to think
16 about ways that maybe we can engage this
17 larger group if it's not on this
18 Commission in some other capacity for
19 those other 191 people who don't make it
20 into the Commission, how we might put
21 them to work for the Parks and Recreation
22 system.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
24 very, very much. You may have presented
25 it as a rhetorical question, but you

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2 should know that Councilman Clarke
3 actually did share with us what his
4 intentions are. So we're going to ask
5 him to, if you would, simply repeat for
6 those of us who -- what our goals and
7 intentions are.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
9 Madam Chair, and thank you for the
10 question.

11 As the Chair said earlier, as
12 we participated in this process for the
13 second day, it quickly became quite clear
14 that there was no way that we could allow
15 such talent and interest to leave this
16 process and feel like they were either
17 rejected or not wanted, because the
18 reality is, we only have nine slots at
19 the end of the day.

20 So we're talking about -- and I
21 actually just got off the phone with one
22 of the City's lawyers to talk about
23 forming some process/entity that will
24 allow people, not only the people that
25 have participated in these forums but

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2 anyone who is interested to participate
3 in a meaningful way, to make sure that we
4 don't lose that level of interest and
5 that talent that has come before us over
6 the last couple of days. And I
7 anticipate the next two hearings will
8 have a similar type of response.

9 So we're going to -- and you
10 may be successful. If you're not, trust
11 me, you will not be able to get rid of
12 us. We're going to be calling you.
13 We're going to be asking you to be
14 engaged in a meaningful way, not only in
15 your community but in the City of
16 Philadelphia. So absolutely.

17 MS. KNAPP: Glad to hear it.
18 Thank you again.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Councilman
20 Jones.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
22 Madam Chair.

23 And also, if there's not enough
24 room for Parks and Recreation, there's
25 plenty of room for the intellectual

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2 property to help solve our budget process
3 and our budget problem. So if you want
4 to chip in and volunteer for that as
5 well, there's no line at that door.

6 MS. KNAPP: Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,
8 sir. Good afternoon. Please state your
9 name for the record.

10 MR. KROM: Good afternoon. My
11 name is Adam Krom, and it's an honor to
12 be with you today and it's an honor to be
13 among such worthy applicants. And I know
14 that that's been said a lot, but I really
15 wish that the entire city or a larger
16 crowd could be here to see the energy and
17 the potential of the Park. And for
18 anyone that didn't have the benefit of
19 applying for the Fairmount Park
20 Commission, I applied in 2007, went
21 through that process, got pretty far
22 along, and I can't tell you how different
23 this is and how much energy this sort of
24 reveals within the populus of the City of
25 Philadelphia. It's really quite

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2 inspiring. So ask me about that
3 sometime.

4 In terms of why I was applying
5 for the Parks and Recreation Commission,
6 I was encouraged to by others, because I
7 believe that as a planner, I have some
8 attributes and some contributions to
9 offer the City.

10 I work for the company Wallace,
11 Roberts & Todd, which has already been
12 described here today, and I've worked
13 there for many years, or, well, not
14 compared to Richard, who I guess goes
15 back about 45 years. Only for me about
16 six or eight years. In that time, I've
17 worked around the City for various CDCs,
18 such as the Fairmount Neighborhood CDC,
19 and after we wrote the neighborhood plan
20 there, which was my first project at WRT,
21 we signed up for the tax program where we
22 contributed \$100,000 to the CDC for its
23 operations through our business taxes.

24 I've also been involved with
25 the New Kensington Waterfront Plan and

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2 the Central Delaware Civic Vision that
3 was recently completed by Penn Praxis, as
4 well as GreenPlan, worked for the
5 Philadelphia Water Department on green
6 streets, Cobbs Creek, Parkway, et cetera.

7 So in that work as a planner, I
8 think that I've not only experience
9 across the City of Philadelphia and all
10 of its great assets, but I also bring the
11 experience of having worked around the
12 country and having traveled quite
13 extensively.

14 So my personal goals for the
15 Parks and Recreation system are to return
16 the facilities to a state of good repair;
17 to improve the ecological functioning of
18 the Park; to encourage greater
19 pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to
20 the Park, because Philadelphia as a
21 walkable city is also a city that has a
22 large portion of the population that does
23 not drive; and also to assist in the
24 creation of world-class recreation
25 facilities.

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2 Last summer in our office, we
3 had an intern from the Charter High
4 School for Architecture and Design,
5 Jamal, who I think was from Point Breeze,
6 and he's currently a student at Syracuse
7 University studying architecture. And
8 while he was at WRT, I would talk with
9 him about his perception of the Parks and
10 Recreation system in the City, and he
11 expressed, frankly, quite a lot of
12 frustration on the state of the
13 basketball courts, the public pools, the
14 park and just in general with the
15 facilities, because he knew from visiting
16 friends and family in other places that
17 there were better facilities out there
18 and that there was a greater potential.
19 And he was pretty certain that things
20 could get better.

21 Enrique Penalosa was inspiring
22 to me. He spoke at Penn a few years ago.
23 He's the former Mayor of Bogota, and he's
24 fond of saying that children are a kind
25 of indicator species. If we can build a

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2 successful city for children, we will
3 have a successful city for all people.
4 And he was one of the -- while he was
5 Mayor of the City, he pushed for the
6 expansion of the park system, the
7 construction of libraries and something
8 called ciclovias, which was where we
9 closed the major streets to automobiles
10 on the weekends and turn them into
11 recreation spaces for bicycling, skating
12 and calisthenics, exercise, et cetera,
13 not only from a recreational standpoint
14 but really a social integration to create
15 social cohesion within the City.

16 So in talking with Jamal, who
17 was 17, he really convinced me that we
18 have to do a much better job of serving
19 the youth of our city, because we really
20 want to retain our talented youth and we
21 want to have them choose to live in the
22 City of Philadelphia and contribute in
23 the future. So by investing in parks and
24 rec, we really are securing our future as
25 a city.

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2 Now, as you know, the Trust for
3 Public Land recently estimated that
4 Philadelphia's park system provides
5 billions of dollars in direct value to
6 City government and residents. We often
7 talk about how much parks and rec costs.
8 We're not as often talking about what it
9 pays. So I quote from the report, that
10 "Altogether the research shows that
11 Philadelphia's parks provide the City and
12 its residents with huge value: \$23
13 million in direct city revenue, \$16
14 million in municipal cost savings, \$729
15 million in generated wealth for
16 residents, and \$1.1 billion in cost
17 savings for citizens," which is about 100
18 times the amount that the City spends on
19 parks each year.

20 So in the midst of the current
21 financial turmoil, I hope we can retain
22 the perspective to realize that this is a
23 temporary situation, and as we look
24 forward, I hope we continue to improve
25 the Parks and Recreation system to not

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2 only make our city more livable, but
3 because it will essentially be paying us
4 dividends in the future.

5 I loved the quote earlier from
6 the gentleman that said that if you look
7 around you and you don't see a leader,
8 then maybe it's your turn. I read a
9 number of years ago the quote from
10 Mahatma Gandhi that said that you have to
11 be the change that you want to see in the
12 world, and I try to remember that every
13 day. So I think that -- I'm really glad
14 that you put the call out to the City to
15 serve on the Commission and I'm really
16 impressed with the results. So I wish
17 you good luck, and I hope that we all can
18 assist the Parks and Recreation system in
19 the future.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
22 very, very much for your testimony.

23 Good afternoon.

24 MS. LABNO: Good afternoon,
25 everyone, ladies and gentlemen. My name

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2 is Kim Labno and I am here today to
3 express my sincere wish to serve as a
4 member of the Commission on Parks and
5 Recreation.

6 I don't have written testimony
7 to submit today, but I'll be happy to do
8 that this week, and I have submitted
9 letters of recommendation from
10 representatives of White Dog Community
11 Enterprises, the City's Department of
12 Recreation and Penn State Outreach Center
13 in Philadelphia.

14 My professional experience
15 qualifies me for the position. I have a
16 lot of experience with land assessment,
17 land regulatory and property right
18 issues, watershed management and
19 environmental stewardship/sustainability
20 activities, like storm water management,
21 urban agriculture. I have relationships
22 with people within these groups, and that
23 is borne out in my application materials
24 and my letters of recommendation.

25 So with my remaining minute or

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2 so, what I wanted to do was to focus on
3 my personal passion and commitment
4 towards the City's environmental
5 movement.

6 I have dedicated hundreds of
7 hours in volunteer work in a variety of
8 capacities, but I want to touch on two
9 projects that I'm most proud of. The
10 first is as a volunteer member with the
11 Philadelphia Urban Food and Fitness
12 Alliance. This is a work -- this is a
13 youth-driven advocacy work group that's
14 funded by the Kellogg Foundation to
15 identify and solve problems associated
16 with children's health and wellness. The
17 youth went out into the City and surveyed
18 over 650 households, provided a very good
19 database for us to address, and what they
20 found was that accessible, affordable
21 food and safe opportunities for play were
22 the biggest obstacles and the most
23 important things for children's health
24 and wellness and their family's health
25 and wellness.

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2 I'm very proud to have worked
3 with White Dog Pennsylvania Health
4 Management Corp., the City's Public
5 Health Department and others in the first
6 phase of the project, and I'm proud to be
7 part of the second phase of the project,
8 which will be the Action Plan submitted
9 to Kellogg Foundation that can bring
10 millions of dollars into the City to
11 support our urban sustainable ag movement
12 and also our recreation activities.

13 The second thing I'm very proud
14 of is, in the last six months, I have
15 been the leader in connecting a number of
16 groups in South Philadelphia where I live
17 to form the first community garden in the
18 Lower Italian Market. I brought together
19 leaders from Passyunk Square Civic
20 Association, Capitolo Advisory Committee,
21 the Department of Parks and Recreation
22 and community neighbors to create this
23 garden, which will be about 3,000 square
24 feet in the first phase and hopefully
25 5,000 square feet in the second phase.

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2 The monies that we generate
3 from our dues will go for infrastructure
4 improvements that the Park can't afford
5 because of the City's budget constraints,
6 and in addition to the softball league
7 fees, we hope to have the opportunity to
8 subsidize our after-school childcare
9 program, which is really important for
10 working parents to have a safe place to
11 have their kids after school.

12 These are just two of the
13 activities that I've been involved with
14 on a volunteer basis, and I would
15 certainly work very hard as a member of
16 the Commission to benefit the City at
17 large and its recreational opportunities.

18 I want to thank the Council
19 very much for their time and wish good
20 luck to everyone.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
22 very much, and thank you for appreciating
23 this process, that clearly Councilman
24 Clarke and I had a vision, and your
25 comments really bode well for what we

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2 thought was possible. Thank you very
3 much.

4 Patrick Lamb, Robert Lambert,
5 Anthony Langford. Mark LaVelle, Robert
6 Lipschutz, Andrew Lofton, Von Love.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
10 certainly welcome to join the witness
11 table. You're welcome to have a seat,
12 sir.

13 Please, if you could move the
14 mike over, we'll start with the gentleman
15 on my extreme left. State your name for
16 the record.

17 MR. LANGFORD: Anthony
18 Langford.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you
20 have testimony for us?

21 MR. LANGFORD: No.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. Not
23 a problem. I just want to make sure I
24 don't miss it up here.

25 MR. LANGFORD: I apologize.

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2 That's forthcoming.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
4 quite all right.

5 MR. LANGFORD: First of all,
6 I'm going to take this opportunity to
7 thank you, Madam Chairperson and
8 Councilmembers, for giving me an
9 opportunity to give testimony as to why I
10 feel I should be considered for a seat on
11 this new Commission.

12 A little personal background
13 about myself. I was born in New Jersey
14 and raised partially in New Jersey.
15 During my life in Philadelphia, I lived
16 in the Strawberry Mansion section of
17 Philadelphia, 33rd and Oxford Street. So
18 I lived right around the corner from the
19 park, which was my big backyard, so to
20 speak.

21 I have a Bachelor's of Arts
22 Degree in Political Science and I've
23 taken some graduate classes in public
24 administration in hopes of one time
25 obtaining my Master's in public

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2 administration.

3 But one of the reasons why I
4 want to go over my qualifications, that
5 over the years of my volunteer
6 experience, I've gained a great deal of
7 knowledge, skills and experience being
8 involved with the Fairmount Park system.
9 Much of this experience was hands-on.
10 This, plus some of the other additional
11 qualifications I bring to the table, make
12 me well suited to be a member of the
13 Commission on Parks and Recreation.

14 By serving in the capacity as a
15 Friends of East Park member and rising to
16 President of that organization, which is
17 now a 501(c)(3), it has given me an
18 opportunity to forge relationships with
19 the Fairmount Park staff and to become
20 involved with the inner workings of the
21 Fairmount Park system. As a member of
22 the Friends of East Park and being
23 greatly influenced by my mentor,
24 Ms. Floyd Dotson, she urged us to get
25 involved and get active. We went on to

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2 have the Friends of East Park lease the
3 33rd and Diamond Street -- or I should
4 say 33rd and Oxford Street driving range,
5 golf driving range, from the Fairmount
6 Park and the City of Philadelphia. So we
7 had a lease agreement that ran for
8 approximately six or seven years until
9 they decided to put the lease -- their
10 driving range up for new contracting and
11 RFP. So we no longer have that lease.

12 But in the interim, I have been
13 involved with the Fairmount -- or I
14 should say the Mander Advisory Council,
15 the 33rd and Diamond Street Rec Center,
16 which oversaw the recreation and sports
17 programming for the Mander Recreation
18 Center, and our council's long
19 persistence eventually was rewarded with
20 a swimming pool being placed there at
21 that Mander -- at the Mander Recreation
22 Center during the Rendell Administration.
23 And it was like a ten-year endeavor, but
24 we were successful and persistent. So
25 that pool was one of the first pools that

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2 had been placed, a new pool, in that part
3 of the City in many years.

4 I was also a past Treasurer of
5 the John Coltrane Society, which is now
6 abolished. If anyone is familiar with
7 the jazz music, John Coltrane House was
8 on 33rd and Oxford Street, and cousin
9 Mary, which was his cousin, was very
10 active in keeping that legacy ongoing.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thirty
12 seconds, sir.

13 MR. LANGFORD: To continue, I'm
14 also an active committee person at 33rd
15 and Oxford Street and have been for over
16 20 years. I'm working with the
17 Philadelphia Horticultural Society with
18 the land care, the vacant land care
19 initiative, and we have been charged with
20 cleaning and maintaining 100 lots for
21 2009. I'm also a Board member of the
22 Astoria Mansion Community Development
23 Council, and we're actively involved with
24 currently having development of 26
25 housing units in the very near future.

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2 And these are just some of the
3 qualifications that I bring to the table,
4 and hope I am strongly considered to be a
5 candidate for this Commission. And I
6 want to thank you for your time.

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

10 Good afternoon.

11 MR. LAMB: Good afternoon. My
12 name is Patrick Lamb. First, I'd like to
13 thank you for the opportunity to testify
14 today, Madam Chairman and Councilman
15 Clarke.

16 I applied for the position on
17 the Commission on Parks and Recreation
18 because I believe that my 34 years of
19 experience in building and maintaining
20 recreational facilities, as well as
21 directing special events for the City
22 would contribute to the Commission's
23 goals. In addition, as a member of
24 Philadelphia Parks Alliance and the
25 Friends of Gorgas Park, I continue my

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2 strong commitment to our parks and
3 recreation centers as critical factors in
4 promoting community economic development.

5 When the maintenance
6 departments of Fairmount Park and
7 Recreation are combined, personnel and
8 equipment will have to be reassigned, and
9 some maintenance facilities may have to
10 be abandoned. Neither department has the
11 number of maintenance personnel it needs.
12 Therefore, it is extremely important that
13 the decisions made concerning maintenance
14 operations meet strategic goals. Of
15 course, these decisions will be made by
16 the Parks and Recreation Commissioner,
17 but I believe the Commission can play an
18 important role in advising him on these
19 matters.

20 My service in the Recreation
21 Department also included 24 years
22 supervising the Department's Special
23 Events Unit. Both Fairmount Park and the
24 Recreation Department are involved in
25 supporting special events. When both

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2 departments are combined, a special
3 events policy for the combined department
4 will have to be developed. The current
5 policy requiring that the City's costs
6 for special events be borne by the
7 event's sponsor is workable for small
8 events. However, for large events, such
9 as the Mummers Parade, the Bike Race and
10 the Broad Street Run, City funding has
11 been decreased and an alternate
12 sponsorship must be identified. If
13 appointed to the Commission, I can
14 contribute my years of experience in
15 working with the leaders of these events,
16 as well as community groups to build
17 consensus, to recommend strategic
18 initiatives to sustain, support and
19 expand special events.

20 Thank you for your attention to
21 my testimony today. I am happy to answer
22 any questions.

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

25 Good afternoon, sir.

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2 MR. LIPSCHUTZ: Good afternoon.

3 It looks like you and I are sticking it
4 out.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

6 Stick-to-itiveness it's called.

7 MR. LIPSCHUTZ: My name is
8 Robert Lipschutz and I'm addressing this
9 testimony to Chairwoman Reynolds Brown
10 and to the absent members who are not
11 here. Oh, there's Darrell Clarke in the
12 back.

13 I'm offering myself as a
14 candidate for the Commission on Parks and
15 Recreation to represent, quote, "the over
16 70," end of quote, voters and taxpayers
17 and because I am now semi-retired with
18 the time, energy and qualifications to do
19 the job.

20 I have been a general
21 contractor for more than 50 years. I was
22 responsible for the architectural design,
23 development and construction of the
24 Philadelphia Aquarama, the Embassy Suites
25 and the L.S.G. Sky Chefs Building at

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2 Philadelphia International Airport. I
3 have also been involved closely with land
4 acquisition and construction of five
5 Federation Senior Citizen Housing
6 buildings. Other projects are listed on
7 the attached brochure. I submitted one
8 brochure to you. Of late, I have been a
9 consultant to the construction industry.

10 I could bring to the Parks and
11 Recreation Commission extensive overnight
12 camping experience. For example, I have
13 been involved for 60 years at Camp Reeta
14 and Arthur as a camper, counselor,
15 specialist in pioneering and nature
16 studies and ultimately President of the
17 Camp Board of Directors, a volunteer
18 position. The above has given me
19 experience in watershed management -- I
20 have battled the flooding Perkiomen many
21 times -- preservation of green space and
22 natural habitats. I am an ardent
23 supporter of pragmatic sustainability in
24 all areas of our city.

25 My years in general contracting

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2 and consulting have allowed me to develop
3 a knowledge of assessment and valuation
4 of properties, as well as the
5 machinations in acquiring them. I have
6 no personal holdings in any lands or
7 properties that might influence or affect
8 my judgment.

9 Since I was a boy, I have
10 enjoyed the many pleasures of Fairmount
11 Park, as a scout, cyclist and supporter
12 of the Dell, the Mann Music Center and
13 the Playhouse in the Park. I would like
14 my grandchildren to be able to experience
15 the Park and other green spaces as I
16 have.

17 My years of working as
18 President of a major synagogue, of the
19 camps and of Federation Housing have
20 honed my fundraising skills. I would
21 happily put them to use in the services
22 of this Commission.

23 In fact, I offer you all of my
24 skills and experiences, plus the
25 knowledge that I owe no one any favor.

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2 Thank you.

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

5 You have distinguished
6 yourself. Yesterday our youngest
7 candidate was 21. So now we can
8 factually say that we have candidates
9 everywhere from 21 to 70.

10 MR. LIPSCHUTZ: You didn't ask
11 me how old I was.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Did you
13 say 70 years old?

14 MR. LIPSCHUTZ: No. I
15 represent --

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Seventy
17 years of experience.

18 MR. LIPSCHUTZ: Over 70 years.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, then
20 I need to correct that.

21 MR. LIPSCHUTZ: Yes. Well, I'm
22 over a bit more.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
24 then. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

25 MR. LIPSCHUTZ: Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Mark

3 LaVelle, Andrew Lofton, Von Love, Reed

4 Lyons, Elizabeth Milroy, Jennifer Nagle,

5 Michael Walker and Anthony Waskie.

6 (Witnesses approached witness
7 table.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're

9 welcome to take the witness seats, and

10 the rest of you may sit in the black

11 chairs behind the witness table. If you

12 have testimony, we'd love to have that.

13 Okay. We'll start to my

14 extreme left. Please.

15 MR. LaVELLE: Thank you, ma'am.

16 I just wanted to start off by saying it's

17 an honor and privilege to sit in front of

18 you and be able to lend my experience to

19 you. My name is Mark LaVelle and I'm 35

20 years old and I live in the River Ward

21 area. And don't hold this next sentence

22 against me, but I'm employed by the

23 Philadelphia Parking Authority. So

24 hopefully the people don't get tickets

25 outside here.

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2 I'm applying for this
3 opportunity for this volunteer program,
4 and I stress the volunteer program
5 because in the River Ward area, we have
6 the Penn Praxis, which is going to be
7 developing along the riverfront. And I
8 have the full backing of between
9 Fishtown, Kensington, Port Richmond, as
10 far up as Bridesburg of volunteers. I
11 have over 300 signatures of committed
12 volunteers, which will further if I get
13 elected to this position, and even if I
14 don't, are willing to join in this
15 program.

16 I know I'll be an outstanding
17 member of the Committee because of my
18 deep passion for the Parks and Recreation
19 in the City of Philadelphia, which I
20 frequently use as Director of many sports
21 leagues and tournaments. I'm also a
22 volunteer football, soccer, basketball
23 and baseball coach in the River Wards
24 area, which I work with many youth in the
25 area, encourage them through sports to

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2 achieve their best and respect themselves
3 and others.

4 I have many ideas in
5 fundraising which can help our great city
6 overcome our financial hardships; in
7 particular, with the Recreation
8 Department. I organize a sports
9 tournament every year at three recreation
10 centers in the River Ward; in particular,
11 the Margaret "Peg" McCook Scholarship
12 Fund and Sports Tournament, which over
13 the last ten years helped me raise
14 scholarships in excess of \$275,000 for
15 kids entering high school in our area.
16 These kids do not have to participate in
17 the sports program to be eligible. We
18 look on hardships with the area. And not
19 to taking away anything from the
20 children, when we organize these
21 tournaments, they raise close, just on
22 the three-day weekend, they raise close
23 to 37,000 between the three every year.

24 It brings 300 teams not just
25 from the City of Philadelphia. As far

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2 away as Brooklyn, as far away as Boston,
3 Massachusetts come down every year to
4 play in this tournament, which in turn
5 brings into our great city and
6 vice-versa. The winners of my
7 tournaments I send up there at no cost to
8 them to represent our City of
9 Philadelphia.

10 I'm currently working with all
11 the unions to provide anywhere from
12 lighting from our International
13 Brotherhood of Electric Workers, to
14 fencing from our ironworkers and grounds
15 keeping and the asphalts for us to
16 further our playing conditions.

17 I have many more ideas which
18 are long in detail, and if I am
19 considered for this position, I believe
20 they will succeed in the advancement of
21 our Parks and Recreation and all the
22 goals that we set forward from this day
23 forward.

24 Thank you in advance for your
25 time and consideration.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
3 very, very much. And let the record show
4 we do not discriminate because of where
5 people work. You don't ever have to
6 apologize for that.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. MILROY: Madam Chair,
9 members of Council, my name is Elizabeth
10 Milroy. Thank you for this opportunity
11 to explain my interest in serving on the
12 Philadelphia Commission on Parks and
13 Recreation.

14 Thanks to your efforts and
15 Philadelphia's voters, this is a new day
16 for Philadelphia's parks and playgrounds.
17 I appreciate the challenge City Councils
18 now face in crafting a vigorous new
19 department from two departments with very
20 different histories, cultures and
21 mandates.

22 I am the internationally
23 recognized authority on the history of
24 Philadelphia's green spaces. I am a
25 Professor of Art History and American

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2 Studies at Wesleyan University. I am
3 also a homeowner, voter and taxpayer in
4 Belmont Hills, Lower Merion Township. I
5 earned a doctorate at the University of
6 Pennsylvania, and I have maintained close
7 ties to Philadelphia for over 30 years.

8 I want to serve on the
9 Commission so that I can share my unique,
10 holistic understanding of how
11 Philadelphia works. I teach and write
12 about the past so Philadelphians will
13 enjoy a better and stronger present and
14 future. Friends and colleagues
15 encouraged me to apply to join the
16 Commission. As my reference letters
17 attest, I inspire people to work together
18 even in challenging situations. I share
19 stories and ideas in a way that helps
20 others to see solutions clearly. And I
21 have the abiding devotion of a longtime
22 Park user.

23 I have worked in collaborative
24 facilities planning, personnel management
25 and grants administration. I am a team

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2 player and consensus builder. I believe
3 that effective advisors are those who
4 know their audience and listen carefully,
5 who understand the context of a
6 particular challenge or opportunity and,
7 most important, who respect the
8 constituents with whom they work to find
9 equitable solutions. I carry no
10 political agenda beyond a concern for the
11 nurturing of Philadelphia's Parks and
12 Recreation facilities. I believe that
13 everyone in the Greater Philadelphia
14 region should be able to enjoy these
15 resources equitably.

16 The new Department of Parks and
17 Recreation will have to manage one of the
18 largest collections of historic sites in
19 the nation. But it is through these
20 places that we come to know ourselves as
21 citizens and neighbors. It is crucial,
22 therefore, that at least one member be
23 familiar with the challenges of historic
24 preservation so she can assist the City
25 in identifying viable new approaches to

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2 adaptive reuse that respect history while
3 enriching the community. Knowing our
4 history makes our future that much
5 stronger.

6 The resume attached to my
7 application lists my professional and
8 community activities and my
9 qualifications.

10 For your interest, I have
11 enclosed a published essay on parks
12 history with my testimony.

13 Thank you again.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
15 for your testimony.

16 Good afternoon.

17 MR. LYONS: Good afternoon,
18 Madam Chairperson, members of the
19 Committee. My name is Reed Lyons and I'm
20 delighted to be here today in support of
21 my application to serve on the
22 Philadelphia Commission on Parks and
23 Recreation.

24 By combining the Fairmount Park
25 Commission and the Department of Parks

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2 and Recreation into a single Commission
3 on Parks and Recreation, City government
4 will benefit from a coherent approach to
5 regulating our recreational resources.
6 This Commission requires a sense of
7 vision and leadership to develop
8 resourceful strategies to protect our
9 recreational areas, promote
10 sustainability and make Philadelphia an
11 attractive destination for our citizens,
12 as well as for tourism and private
13 investment.

14 I have spent my professional
15 career forging relationships between the
16 public, private and non-profit spheres in
17 order to incentivize economic and urban
18 development. When these sectors work in
19 tandem, there is boundless possibility.

20 My candidacy for service on the
21 Commission is supported by a unique blend
22 of educational, government, legal and
23 civic experience. As a practicing land
24 use attorney at Blank Rome LLP in the
25 City of Philadelphia, I have extensive

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2 knowledge in matters pertaining to land
3 development in many Philadelphia
4 neighborhoods. My skills allow me to
5 provide advice on a broad array of
6 subjects impacting the Commission,
7 including real estate acquisition, urban
8 planning, sustainable development and
9 legislative analysis. I have worked on
10 land use and planning issues for a myriad
11 of clients, most recently providing
12 valuable service in connection with City
13 Council's consideration and approval of
14 the proposed American Commerce Center at
15 1800 Arch Street.

16 In addition to my legal career
17 in the private sector, I provide a
18 committed service in the government and
19 non-profit spheres, affording me the
20 opportunity to examine issues pertinent
21 to the Commission from a multi-faceted
22 vantage point. In 2002, I was awarded a
23 competitive government fellowship with
24 the New York City Urban Fellows program,
25 which combined full-time employment at

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2 the Neighborhood Development Division of
3 the Department of Small Business Services
4 with a year-long seminar series exploring
5 the complex mechanics of municipal
6 government.

7 Throughout my tenure, I worked
8 to foster economic and community
9 development through partnerships between
10 the public and private sectors.
11 Specifically, I conducted an efficiency
12 analysis to transform New York City's
13 dispersement of federal Community
14 Development Block Grant funds to local
15 development corporations into a
16 merit-based process mandated with
17 standards of accountability. I believe I
18 can bring my ideas from my experience in
19 government to this Commission.

20 By engaging the private sector,
21 the Commission will not only bring
22 significant financial resources into the
23 fold, but will engender a sense of
24 citizen participation, where ideas are
25 vetted in an open and transparent forum.

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2 My active involvement in
3 non-profit organizations such as
4 Operation Understanding demonstrates a
5 commitment to building bridges between
6 various constituencies in the
7 Philadelphia community. As an alumnus
8 and Co-Chair of the Operation
9 Understanding Young Friends' fundraiser,
10 I have experienced addressing the
11 challenges of raising money in uncertain
12 economic times. Operation Understanding
13 is a non-profit organization committed to
14 promoting diversity and cross-cultural
15 dialogue between the African American and
16 Jewish communities in the City of
17 Philadelphia and subsists entirely
18 through fundraising. It will be
19 incumbent on the Commission to seek
20 alternative means of securing financial
21 assistance for our Parks and Recreation
22 system. I am eager to use my experiences
23 to assist the Commission in meeting this
24 difficult challenge.

25 Notwithstanding my academic and

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2 professional qualification, I am
3 fervently committed to the City of
4 Philadelphia. I am a lifelong resident
5 of the City of Philadelphia, the son of
6 two Philadelphia School District teachers
7 and a graduate of George Washington High
8 School and the University of
9 Pennsylvania.

10 This city is blessed with a
11 vast and rich portfolio of recreational
12 space that can be marketed and used to
13 position the City for great success in
14 the 21st century. I believe that I will
15 bring a sense of energy and innovation to
16 the Commission. My passion and
17 commitment to the City of Philadelphia
18 will translate into being a passionate
19 and committed advocate on behalf of the
20 Commission. I bring to the table a fresh
21 voice, embodying a new generation of
22 Philadelphians eager to serve in
23 municipal government.

24 I would like to thank you for
25 the opportunity and for your

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2 consideration of my application. I would
3 be happy to answer any of your questions.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

5 Councilman.

6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I'm fine.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
8 all very, very, very much. Thank you
9 very much.

10 Jennifer Nagle -- please be
11 seated. Michael Walker, Anthony Waskie.
12 And if there's anyone else who would care
13 to testify, you're certainly welcome to
14 come to the witness table.

15 (Witnesses approached witness
16 table.)

17 MS. NAGLE: Last, but not
18 least.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: For today.

20 MS. NAGLE: For today, exactly.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. If
22 you could state your name for the record.

23 Please, sir, we'll be sure to
24 take that.

25 So if you could please state

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2 your name for the record and we'd be
3 happy to get started.

4 MR. ZELLERS-FREDERICK: Good
5 afternoon, Madam Chairperson, members of
6 the Committee. My name is Andrew
7 Zellers-Frederick, and I first must admit
8 that I am in awe of the vast talent --

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please let
10 me just hear your full name again.

11 MR. ZELLERS-FREDERICK: Andrew
12 Zellers-Frederick. It's the very last
13 one. They were fitting me in today.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Not a
15 problem. I just want to make sure I have
16 you on my sheet.

17 MR. ZELLERS-FREDERICK: And
18 I'll have my testimony. I'll be able to
19 bring it over tomorrow.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
21 Terrific. Just for my record here,
22 please spell your last name for me.

23 MR. ZELLERS-FREDERICK:
24 Z-E-L-L-E-R-S, hyphen, F-R-E-D-E-R-I-C-K.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Terrific.

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2 Okay. Proceed.

3 MR. ZELLERS-FREDERICK: I just
4 wanted to admit that I am really in awe
5 of the vast talent, passion and expertise
6 that was in this room today. I really
7 appreciate the opportunity to participate
8 in this process.

9 I am currently the Executive
10 Director of the Masonic Library and
11 Museum of Pennsylvania, the national
12 historic landmark directly across the
13 street from City Hall. I bring my
14 expertise in the cultural field,
15 including years with the National Park
16 Service, and wholeheartedly offer it
17 today to the City of Philadelphia.

18 I sometimes think that sites
19 that are within Fairmount Park are
20 overlooked when our other treasures in
21 the City, like Independence Hall, are
22 highlighted to the world. I believe
23 these sites and our related natural and
24 recreational resources need to be
25 strongly promoted to our schools, and

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2 they also will serve as a major magnet to
3 attract visitors and new residents to
4 Philadelphia to help our current economic
5 status.

6 As a lifelong resident of the
7 area and as an individual who has worked
8 within the boundaries of Fairmount Park,
9 for 17 years I was the Executive Director
10 of Historic Rittenhouse Town in the
11 northwest where I helped transform a
12 previously neglected site into an asset
13 for the City. I am, therefore, very
14 familiar and experienced with the
15 logistical operations of Fairmount Park
16 and its historic and natural value to the
17 citizens of Philadelphia and to the
18 region.

19 Fairmount Park is one of the
20 crown jewels of Philadelphia and deserves
21 to be treated as such by all that utilize
22 and benefit from it. As a possible
23 Commissioner, I strongly believe I can
24 bring the necessary expertise on all
25 levels to this volunteer position,

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2 utilizing every resource currently at
3 Fairmount Park's disposal and many more
4 that can be developed. I believe I have
5 the professional contacts that would be a
6 great benefit to Fairmount Park, as well
7 as the experience with the agencies'
8 professional staff, which, again, I
9 worked with for 17 years.

10 I advocate the necessity of
11 beginning a major campaign to make all
12 the region's citizens aware of the
13 quality of life that Fairmount Park
14 brings to enrich this region and the City
15 of Philadelphia, and the tremendous loss
16 we would suffer if we did not have it.
17 We truly have a prize which the majority
18 of communities throughout the world can
19 only dream of, and it deserves to be
20 treated as such.

21 As a possible Commissioner, I
22 know I can bring this appreciation and
23 the needed expertise to further foster
24 this feeling.

25 From working for more than a

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2 quarter century in the region's cultural
3 community, I know the ways to
4 successfully function with strained and
5 limited funding and other resources which
6 would benefit this position. Over my
7 tenure, I have accomplished more with
8 less, and I know I can do the same if
9 selected.

10 I have really not much to add,
11 with everybody else that was here today,
12 but to thank you for this time, and I
13 really commend you for the difficult
14 decisions that you're going to have to
15 make in the near future.

16 So thank you very much.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
18 very welcome. We'll take that.

19 Good afternoon.

20 MR. WASKIE: Good afternoon.

21 Thank you for remaining to the bitter
22 end. Anthony Waskie. I'm a resident of
23 Philadelphia, a Professor of History and
24 Languages at Temple University, and I
25 believe I possess a range of skills and

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2 background, experiences and
3 qualifications that could benefit, I
4 feel, the Commission and the utilization
5 of the park -- better utilization of the
6 park and recreational facilities.
7 Forty-year educator on all levels of
8 education, from kindergarten to graduate
9 study. I have experience in foreign
10 languages, language teaching, cultures
11 and peoples. I was a participant in
12 athletics, both as an athlete myself
13 and -- in years past -- and coaching,
14 both in scholastic level and also on the
15 community level in several different
16 sports. Advisor to student and community
17 groups, organizations, event planning,
18 community service projects and especially
19 fundraising projects. So I'm a member of
20 many Boards of Directors of several
21 non-profit, historical, educational,
22 military and preservation groups and
23 societies with fundraising experience.

24 I'm a historian with
25 specialization in Philadelphia history,

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2 particularly Civil War history, out of
3 which sprang Fairmount Park, and the
4 history of city organizations. I've
5 authored books, other works, articles and
6 presentations on these subjects. And I
7 have extensive experience in tourism and
8 tourism management, founded a tour
9 company, historic tour company, here in
10 Philadelphia, History and Mystery Tours
11 of Philadelphia. Tour guiding, creating
12 tours, research and development of
13 historical tours in the past. I have
14 also done many, many, many tours of
15 historic Fairmount Park and other
16 historic sites in the City, bringing in
17 groups from all over, particularly with
18 the Civil War bent, and they were
19 marveled at the various opportunities
20 available coming to Philadelphia and
21 particularly the parks and recreational
22 centers.

23 I just wanted to briefly cite
24 some of the organizations that I've been
25 associated with over the years. The

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2 Board of Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery,
3 where I am also a historian and author of
4 a guide in history of Laurel Hill; the
5 General Meade Society of Philadelphia,
6 Founder and President; the Meade
7 Educational and Scholarship Foundation
8 which we've generated that raises funds
9 for scholarships. We've adopted the
10 General Meade School here in
11 Philadelphia, 18th and Oxford, providing
12 them with funding, with books, with
13 programs and so on. The Civil War and
14 Emancipation Studies program at Temple;
15 the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation
16 Association; the Grand Army of the
17 Republican Civil War Museum and Library
18 in the Frankford section of Philadelphia,
19 where I serve as Vice-President and
20 Museum Historian; the Octavius V. Catto
21 Society, and we use one of the
22 recreational facilities at 6th and
23 Lombard called Star Garden for a ceremony
24 and presentation each year to honor that
25 famous Civil War and civil rights hero of

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2 Philadelphia, Octavius Catto; Friends of
3 Penn Treaty Park and many others.

4 My theme would be to bring and
5 promote the history of Fairmount Park and
6 the recreational facilities and make that
7 better known. I guess if you wanted to
8 come up with a motto, it would be
9 "history education through recreation for
10 all." And I see that researching and
11 capturing and making available the rich
12 history of the sites within the Park, the
13 monumentation, the buildings and the
14 training sites and so on, the centennial
15 sites, would promote visitation. I would
16 like to publicize it and work on
17 publicizing it -- I've been doing this
18 with many of these organizations for many
19 years -- what is available, create
20 history walking tours with signage,
21 brochures, audio and visual access to
22 show people what is available and what
23 can be had, what can be done. Organize
24 educational tours on a regular basis,
25 historical events to draw visitation to

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2 sites and educate the public, and also
3 create fundraising activities, of which
4 I'm quite familiar, by the way, having
5 been involved in some of these Boards
6 over the years, to fund the events,
7 educational and recreational activities
8 for all.

9 So my whole emphasis is going
10 to be on emphasizing, bringing forth,
11 promoting the history of these sites that
12 are little known, little appreciated and
13 certainly a need to be better known and
14 made known.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
17 and thank you for your perspective in
18 terms of what you bring.

19 Good afternoon.

20 MS. NAGLE: Good afternoon,

21 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown and
22 Councilman Clarke and to my audience.

23 Thanks for sticking around.

24 It's been a wonderful afternoon
25 to hear everyone's credentials and what

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2 they would love to bring to the Park.

3 I'm very excited to be here. This is an
4 amazing experience for me, and what a
5 wonderful place to be in, where laws are
6 made and policies and decisions are
7 discussed for residents like me,
8 residents of Philadelphia.

9 I'm one of 250 candidates --

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I need to
11 hear your name, though.

12 MS. NAGLE: Jennifer Nagle.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. We
14 need that for the record.

15 MS. NAGLE: Sorry about that.
16 I got a little ahead of myself.

17 I'm one of only 250 applicants,
18 and what a wonderful testament that is to
19 the change that will only benefit our
20 Parks and Recreation system.

21 I've worked with the
22 Philadelphia Convention and Visitors
23 Bureau for six years. My primary focus
24 is marketing Philadelphia as a sports
25 destination. This means filling hotel

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2 rooms and driving visitor spending.

3 I'm very proud to have the
4 opportunity to work in this area, so much
5 that it creates an economic impact for
6 our region and it creates jobs and
7 maintains jobs in the tourism and
8 hospitality industry.

9 Many of the events I work on
10 place Philadelphia in a national and
11 international spotlight. As for today,
12 our men's NCAA Basketball Tournament, the
13 Army-Navy game, the 2008 Olympic Trials.
14 These are all wonderful events that
15 really place Philadelphia in a very, very
16 special spotlight. I'm privileged to
17 work with our region's leaders on these
18 events. I've worked with the
19 Administration of the Fairmount Park
20 Commission and the Administration of the
21 Department of Recreation, all
22 contributing to help to determine the
23 feasibility of these events for our
24 region.

25 This could be a weekend soccer

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2 tournament where five playing fields are
3 needed. It could be a professional beach
4 volleyball tour stop gracing Fairmount
5 Park, or it's our 2016 Teen Olympic bid
6 effort, which Philadelphia was one of
7 five candidate cities vying for the 2016
8 Teen Summer Olympics, which I still have
9 faith in and I believe will happen for
10 our region. Bring on 2026. I will be
11 here.

12 The joy and fulfillment I have
13 for my career is a direct reflection of
14 my 29 years as a resident in South
15 Philadelphia in the Grays Ferry
16 community. I grew up in Philadelphia's
17 Park and Recreation system, from Markward
18 Playground and Schuylkill River Park to
19 Linear Playground, Singer Square and Vare
20 Recreation Center. These are still the
21 closest parks to me today, as I've
22 recently purchased a new home at 29th and
23 Tasker, reinvesting in a neighborhood I
24 grew up in. I believe my investment is
25 an example for young adults. I believe

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2 similar investments will help make our
3 neighborhoods better every day.

4 This is continuing to grow the
5 vibrancy we need to continue our legacy
6 as a city of great neighborhoods. I
7 think we've had at least ten
8 neighborhoods represented today, and
9 that's been extremely wonderful.

10 There are incredible synergies
11 between the events I have worked on and
12 the impact to our communities. For
13 instance, visiting Athletic Rec at 26th
14 and Masters with USA boxing Olympians and
15 Olympic hopefuls, donating gymnastics
16 equipment after the Olympic Trials to
17 Vare Recreation Center, participating in
18 fundraising and planning efforts to
19 support 2,500 students from the School
20 District to attend the Army-Navy game for
21 the past five years. These experiences
22 are life-altering for an inner city
23 child, and the excitement on their faces
24 when you see them and they're part of
25 these opportunities, it's overwhelming.

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2 We need to continue to provide
3 meaningful, educational and memorable
4 influences for everyone.

5 I'm here today as a candidate.
6 It's been especially a wonderful,
7 wonderful experience, again, listening to
8 49 folks throughout the afternoon, all
9 with wonderfully great credentials. But
10 I am here as a candidate. I'm here to
11 advocate for youth. And I'm a young
12 adult who works, lives, plays and is
13 ready to serve in Philadelphia. I want
14 to contribute to the many opportunities
15 for growth that there are within our
16 Parks and Recreation system. I believe I
17 am called to further expand my role by
18 entering into public service, and I want
19 to do this by being a member of the new
20 Commission on Parks and Recreation. And
21 if I'm selected to serve, I would be
22 honored to implement the goals and
23 aspirations of our Park and Recreation
24 system.

25 Thank you very much and thanks

1 3/19/09 - PARKS - RES. 090057

2 for sticking around, again.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
4 thank you very, very much.

5 Councilman Clarke.

6 MS. NAGLE: Any questions?

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: No. I just
8 want to thank -- is this the last group?
9 I just want to thank everyone, although
10 you are not within earshot of all
11 wonderful applicants that we've had
12 today, and we look forward to day three.
13 Thank you so much for coming in.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me
15 close by saying that I agree with you
16 2,000 percent. We did have an
17 extraordinary reach of wonderful
18 candidates, and of the 54 that were
19 scheduled to appear, 44 did appear and
20 offer their testimony.

21 So we thank you for your
22 interest in this important mission.

23 The City Council Committee on
24 Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs is
25 recessed until March the 24th at 2:00

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2 p.m.

3 Thank you very much.

4 (Committee on Parks, Recreation

5 and Cultural Affairs recessed at 4:55

6 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter on March 19, 2009, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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