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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

PUBLIC HEARING

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COMMITTEE ON RULES

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Room 696, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, October 24, 2002
9:40 a.m.

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BILL 020591 - an ordinance to amend the Philadelphia
Zoning Maps, by changing the zoning designations of
certain areas of land located within an area bounded
by City Avenue, 52nd Street, Overbrook Avenue, and
54th Street.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY, Chair

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COUNCILMAN FRANK DICICCO

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COUNCILMAN DARRELL CLARKE

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COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA

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I N D E X

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BILL 020591

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THOMAS CHAPMAN, City Planning Commission 3

KEVIN ROBINSON, St. Joseph's University 5

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1 10/24/02 - RULES - BILL 020591

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good morning, ladies
3 and gentlemen. Sorry for the delay. City Council
4 Committee on Rules is now in session to hear
5 testimony on Bill No. 020591, which is an ordinance
6 to amend the Philadelphia Zoning Maps, by changing
7 the zoning designations of certain areas of land
8 located within an area bounded by City Avenue, 52nd
9 Street, Overbrook Avenue, and 54th Street.

10 Please identify yourself for the record.

11 MR. CHAPMAN: My name is Thomas Chapman.
12 I am the Director of the Development Planning
13 Division of the City Planning Commission. I'm here
14 today to testify on Bill No. 020591. This bill was
15 introduced by Councilman Nutter on September 26,
16 2002.

17 This bill amends the zoning maps by
18 changing the designations of two parcels of land
19 bounded by City Avenue, 52nd Street, Overbrook
20 Avenue, and 54th Street to a designation of an
21 Institutional Development District. This bill
22 expands the Institutional Development District of
23 Saint Joe's University Campus. The university
24 proposes to construct three structures at these
25 locations. The first two structures will be built

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2 along City Avenue between 54th and 52nd Street.

3 There will be 225 parking spaces at street level,
4 and above that there will be a four-story student
5 residential facility which will house 425 students.

6 The second phase of the project calls
7 for the construction of a 48,000 square foot
8 commercial building. This building will provide one
9 story of neighborhood retail commercial use at
10 grade. And above that, there will be a four-story
11 400-space parking garage.

12 The Planning Commission considered this
13 amendment to Institutional Development District
14 Master Plan of St. Joseph's University at its
15 meeting of October 15, 2002.

16 I'll be happy to answer any questions of
17 the Committee.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

19 Any questions for the witness?

20 Councilman Nutter.

21 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.

22 Chairman. I'd like to place on the record my
23 deepest appreciation to the Planning Commission for
24 their timely review of this particular project. I
25 think, as you know, there are always a variety of

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2 complications and issues with these kinds of
3 projects, but the Planning Commission has been very
4 supportive and moved through their process in a
5 timely fashion. And I just want to go on record
6 saying that I deeply appreciate it. It's a
7 desperately-needed project in the Wynnefield
8 community, and the Planning Commission was of great
9 assistance in making sure that it could move
10 forward, and I appreciate it.

11 MR. CHAPMAN: Thank you, Councilman.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

13 Any other questions for Mr. Chapman?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, the

16 Chair calls Kevin Robinson, Vice President for
17 Administrative Services, St. Joe's University.

18 Good morning. Please identify yourself
19 for the record.

20 MR. ROBINSON: Kevin Robinson, Vice
21 President for Administrative Services, St. Joseph's
22 University.

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

24 MR. ROBINSON: Describe the project?

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Whatever you think

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2 is appropriate for the record.

3 MR. ROBINSON: I'll state our
4 objectives. The purpose of the project is
5 threefold: It's to get more full-time undergraduate
6 students living on campus in supervised housing, to
7 increase the amount of parking on campus for
8 students and staff, and to create an attractive
9 entry to the university that fits both the
10 university and the community architecture, what we
11 would consider a significant location on campus and
12 for the community.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Great.

14 Any questions?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

17 MR. ROBINSON: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are also
19 letters of support.

20 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mr. Robinson, please
21 stay for one moment.

22 Mr. Chairman, if I can just make a
23 comment and then I'll take care of the letters.

24 One, thank you again for your testimony
25 as well, Mr. Robinson. I want to also express my

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2 appreciation to you and St. Joe's University, Father
3 Rashford, Rob and Greg, Peter Moriarty from your
4 architecture firm. This has been an engaging
5 process that the university and the community have
6 met about on a number of occasions, as recently as
7 this past Monday, trying to work through a
8 significant development in the community that will
9 immediately improve and upgrade, not only the entry
10 way at 54th and City Avenue, but also seek to
11 resolve some of the other issues that we've been
12 working on in recent times regarding student
13 behavioral issues. And your testimony hits the nail
14 right on the head, that the university seeks to have
15 more of its students on its campus under its own
16 supervision, providing additional parking which will
17 alleviate some the parking and traffic and
18 congestion concerns in the Wynnefield and Overbrook
19 communities, as well as in a second phase the retail
20 opportunities and the jobs that come with those. So
21 I want to commend you for putting together a good
22 team, for having an open mind, working with us in
23 the spirit of cooperation to try to get an important
24 project done. And if you could take that message
25 back to the university and to the Board, I would

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2 greatly appreciate it.

3 Mr. Chairman, there are letters of
4 support from three organizations, and with your
5 permission, I'd like to read them into the record
6 and have them become a part of today's discussion.

7 The first dated October 23, 2002.

8 "Dear Members of City Council, my name
9 is Mattie Johnson, President of the Wynnefield
10 Residents Association. I also live in the
11 Wynnefield section of Philadelphia. My purpose for
12 being here today is regarding Bill No. 020591 which
13 recommends amending the Philadelphia zoning
14 designations of certain areas of land located within
15 areas bounded by City Avenue, 52nd Street, Overbrook
16 Avenue, and 54th Street. This proposed zoning
17 change will insure stabilization of the existing
18 commercial district.

19 "The zoning change will also offer more
20 control of St. Joseph's University students that
21 often times cause disturbances within the community.

22 "As the President of WRA, I am aware of
23 numerous complaints filed by residents regarding
24 off-campus housing and the disturbances from St.
25 Joseph's University students. These disturbances

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2 are parking, trash, disorderly conduct, late night
3 parties and (other activities.)

4 "With the Institutional Development
5 District, this would alleviate the severe shortages
6 of on-campus supervised housing of students and
7 hopefully eliminate most of the community's concerns
8 regarding the St. Joseph's University students.

9 "Saint Joseph's University is working
10 closely with the residents to ensure the
11 institutional development would be compatible with
12 the surrounding residential community.

13 "In closing, the Wynnefield Residents
14 Association supports Bill 020591 along with the
15 proposed St. Joseph's University-Wynnefield
16 Community Development Agreement for the 54th and
17 City Avenue Project."

18 The second letter is from the Rexford
19 Square Association.

20 "The Rexford Square Association is very
21 pleased with the progress that has been made during
22 our series of meetings with St. Joseph's University.
23 We are now in a position to fully support the
24 university's plans for their 54th and City Avenue
25 Development Project.

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2 "We look forward to a continuing good
3 relationship with the University as this project
4 moves forward.

5 "Thank you again for all of your help.

6 "Signed, Peter J. Rescorl, President
7 Rexford Square Association."

8 And lastly, "We're writing on behalf of
9 the residents in the 5200 block of Church Road who
10 have regularly attended meetings regarding the 54th
11 and City Avenue Development Project.

12 "We have had the opportunity to review
13 plans presented by St. Joseph's University and have
14 also participated in developing these plans. We
15 agree to Phase I of the proposal, including recent
16 modifications. We look forward to continued dialog
17 with St. Joseph's University and your office
18 regarding future developments.

19 "Signed, Curtis and Angela Richie on
20 behalf of the 5200 Block of Church Road."

21 Lastly, Mr. Chairman, there is a St.
22 Joseph University-Wynnefield Community Development
23 Agreement that the different constituencies have
24 referred to. This document has been developed in
25 conjunction with the university and the surrounding

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2 neighborhood. And I would also like to add that
3 document to this particular record as a part of
4 today's hearing, with your permission.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

7 Any other questions for this witness?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is there anyone else
10 in the room to testify on this bill?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, that
13 will conclude our hearing of the Rules Committee.

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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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PUBLIC MEETING

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COMMITTEE ON RULES

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Thursday, October 24, 2002

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Public Meeting conducted by the
Committee on Rules, held in Room 696, City Hall,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the above date, to
consider action on the following:

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BILL 020591.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY, Chair

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COUNCILMAN FRANK DICICCO

COUNCILMAN DARRELL CLARKE

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA

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1 10/24/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: We will now convene
3 a public meeting.

4 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
5 Nutter for a motion on Bill No. 020591.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman. I move that Bill 020591 be reported out
8 of this Committee with a favorable recommendation,
9 and a further recommendation that the Rules of
10 Council be suspended so as to permit first reading
11 at our next Session.

12 (Duly seconded.)

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: It's been moved and
14 seconded.

15 All in favor?

16 (Aye.)

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
18 opposed. Bill No. 020591 reported out of this
19 Committee favorably. A request will be made for
20 rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
21 next Council Session.

22 Thank you very much for your attendance
23 today. Council should start shortly.

24 (Council adjourned at 9:50 a.m.)

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

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of October 24, 2002, were reported
fully and accurately by me, and that this is a
correct transcript of the same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON RULES

Lisa C. Bradley, RPR
and Notary Public