

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 050391)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Council Committee on Law and Government to hold hearings to investigate the violation history and enforcement actions of the Department of Licenses & Inspections and the Law Department surrounding various properties along the 6700 block of Ridge Avenue operated as part of a car dealership; and, further authorizing the Committee in furtherance of such investigation to issue subpoenas as may be necessary to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

WHEREAS, In 1998, information was requested from the Department of Licenses and Inspections on the zoning status and permits on file for eight parcels on Ridge Avenue in Roxborough which were owned and operated by a car dealership; and

WHEREAS, At that time, no folder was on file with L&I for three parcels even though these were used for auto storage and auto sales and some type of permits would have been needed for these uses, especially in light of the fact that two of these properties are zoned "R5 Residential;" and

WHEREAS, In other instances, zoning applications were made for structures and signage, but no final decisions were on file; and

WHEREAS, In the summer of 1998, this same car dealership purchased 6761-6763 Ridge Avenue and was issued a demolition permit on September 4, 1998 and attempted to proceed with demolition without the required 21-day posting of the premises; however, due to the vigilance of the neighbors and the civic association, the demolition permit was appealed, a stay was issued, and the owner was made to follow the appropriate process primarily due to the determination of the neighborhood residents; and

WHEREAS, Recently, in late January, literally almost overnight, this same car dealership removed an existing free-standing sign and replaced it with what is essentially an electronic bulletin board; and

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WHEREAS, This car dealership has encased the main show room in what appears to be wall wrap, and has erected signage, banners, inflatable characters and an array of gimmicks which litter the commercial corridor along this stretch of Ridge Avenue; and

WHEREAS, From the perspective of the community, it appears as though this particular business owner can do whatever he wants with his properties without securing any permits or approvals from the relevant City agencies, and primarily from L&I; and

WHEREAS, Despite repeated inquiries and requests for inspections and information over the years, L&I appears to be reluctant to undertake a comprehensive investigation of all of these properties and insure that all codes have been complied with and all necessary permits have been issued for the buildings, parking lots and signage; and

WHEREAS, Numerous illegal signs are mounted on telephone poles, utility poles and fence posts throughout Roxborough advertising this car dealership; and

WHEREAS, The pattern and practices employed by this business owner demonstrate a total disregard for the residential community and neighboring business establishments and for the Philadelphia Code; and

WHEREAS, The lack of enforcement by the City, has also led to frustration and distrust by the residents and civic associations who have had to hire legal counsel to fight their own battles to get compliance and cooperation; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Council Committee on Law and Government is authorized to hold hearings to investigate the violation history and enforcement actions of the Department of Licenses & Inspections and the Law Department surrounding various properties along the 6700 block of Ridge Avenue operated as part of a car dealership; and, further that the Committee is authorized in furtherance of such investigation to issue subpoenas as may be necessary to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fifth of May, 2005.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Nutter

Sponsored by: Councilmember Nutter