COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA SPECIAL INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE ON DEMOLITION PRACTICES

Room 400, City Hall Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Thursday, July 18, 2013 10:15 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS

RESOLUTION 130546 - Resolution authorizing the creation of a "Special Investigating Committee on Demolition Practices in the City of Philadelphia," to investigate safety problems and identify solutions related to the oversight of demolition projects in the City...

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Good |
| 3 | morning. This is a hearing of the |
| 4 | Special Investigative Committee on |
| 5 | Demolition Practices established by |
| 6 | Resolution No. 130546 unanimously adopted |
| 7 | by all members of City Council, |
| 8 | authorized by this Committee to |
| 9 | investigate safety issues and problems, |
| 10 | identify solutions to provide oversight |
| 11 | of demolition processes in the City of |
| 12 | Philadelphia. Further, such an |
| 13 | investigation may use this as a template |
| 14 | to create laws that also govern the |
| 15 | process in the City of Philadelphia. |
| 16 | I am Councilman Curtis Jones. |
| 17 | On this Committee as well with me here |
| 18 | today is Councilman Jim Kenney, who has |
| 19 | spent a considerable amount of time on |
| 20 | the issue of construction safety in the |
| 21 | City of Philadelphia. We will also be |
| 22 | joined by Councilman Bobby Henon, who |
| 23 | also has spent a long professional life |
| 24 | in labor and construction industry, and |
| 25 | Councilwoman Blackwell, who is the Chair |

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| 2 | of Housing in the City of Philadelphia. |
| 3 | The demolition issue has both a |
| 4 | commercial and residential component to |
| 5 | it, so I think it's appropriate. Who |
| 6 | will not be here today is Councilwoman |
| 7 | Maria Quinones-Sanchez, who is the Chair |
| 8 | of the Licenses and Inspection Committee. |
| 9 | I want to recap very briefly. |
| 10 | The first hearing that we had and this |
| 11 | is the third of four potential hearings. |
| 12 | The first hearing focused on the |
| 13 | Department of Licenses and Inspection, |
| 14 | focused on the Mayor of the City of |
| 15 | Philadelphia's process of demolishing |
| 16 | properties, its structure, its permitting |
| 17 | process and so forth. |
| 18 | The second hearing focused on |
| 19 | industry practices, particularly germane |
| 20 | to safety, OSHA standards, private |
| 21 | industry standards, things that were |
| 22 | already in place in the public sector but |
| 23 | also in the private sector. |
| 24 | This hearing today will talk |
| 25 | about intergovernmental cooperation, how |
| | |

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| 2 | departments work with each other in |
| 3 | demolition. And I would be remiss to say |
| 4 | that every department that we requested |
| 5 | has not been able to come. Many of them |
| 6 | have provided written testimony. This is |
| 7 | a point of frustration, but not a point |
| 8 | that will deter us from accomplishing the |
| 9 | best possible safety methods for the |
| 10 | citizens of Philadelphia. |
| 11 | The final hearing will focus on |
| 12 | best practices of other municipalities, |
| 13 | what the big cities in the region do that |
| 14 | have similar housing stock to us and how |
| 15 | we can take a page from their book to try |
| 16 | to make the City of Philadelphia a safer |
| 17 | place. |
| 18 | In addition to the best |
| 19 | practices, we will have a portion of the |
| 20 | hearing dedicated to public comment, |
| 21 | because we received hundreds of |
| 22 | inquiries, e-mails, phone calls about |
| 23 | this process, and sometimes, every now |
| 24 | and then, if you listen to the public, |
| 25 | you can pick up a good idea and a |

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         positive law that will help the City of
 3
         Philadelphia.
                   Today, in addition to looking
 4
         at intergovernmental cooperation, we will
 5
         begin the hearing with a case study.
 6
         We've been particular about not dealing
         with the Market Street collapse, and I
         think all members of this Committee have
 9
         voluntarily avoided dealing with the
10
11
         specifics of that issue because it is an
12
         ongoing legal concern with ramifications
13
         going forward. But what we realize is
14
         that as important as that event was, as
15
         sad as that catastrophe was, that there
16
         are hundreds, hundreds, if not thousands,
17
         of potential catastrophes that this
18
         process may well avoid. A couple of
19
         instances we've seen in recent news
20
         coverage, one at Temple University.
21
         it's a long -- it's long been Councilman
22
         Kenney's concern that we should expand
         this to deal with construction, not just
23
         demolition, and it was -- an example of
24
25
         it was at the Temple collapse recently.
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| Another issue was that I think |
| it was yesterday a building collapsed in |
| North Philadelphia. That's every day. |
| And that in that particular collapse, the |
| roof was in disastrous shape and it was |
| literally four walls being held up by |
| only God's intervention. |
| So what we hope to do is look |
| at this case study and say what can we |
| take from best practices on how to take |
| down a building that is currently being |
| considered for demolition, 1221 through |
| 31 South Broad Street. What is |
| particularly of concern is there are two |
| occupied buildings next to it. So we |
| hope to gain some insight from Drexel |
| University and other experts today to |
| figure out what we should incorporate in |
| public policy. |
| So without further adieu, I see |
| we've been joined by Councilwoman |
| Blackwell and Councilman Robert Henon. |
| So will the Clerk please read |
| the number and title of the resolution. |
| |

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| 2 | THE CLERK: Resolution 130546, |
| 3 | a resolution authorizing the creation of |
| 4 | a "Special Investigating Committee on |
| 5 | Demolition Practices in the City of |
| 6 | Philadelphia." |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Would any |
| 8 | members of the Committee like to give an |
| 9 | opening statement? |
| 10 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes. |
| 11 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilwoman |
| 12 | Blackwell. |
| 13 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank |
| 14 | you. |
| 15 | Good morning, everyone, |
| 16 | especially to the Chairman and to members |
| 17 | of the Committee. |
| 18 | The Chairman has been very |
| 19 | involved, as has all these Committee |
| 20 | members, in what we can do. Today, as we |
| 21 | know and as our hearing list indicates, |
| 22 | we will still have people who are |
| 23 | involved in and has been on the news, |
| 24 | people from the City who are interested |
| 25 | and who deal with this issue. |
| | |

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| 2 | What we wanted to do was pass |
| 3 | out to the Committee information that we |
| 4 | received dealing with Safety First Inc. |
| 5 | We have enough copies for everybody. And |
| 6 | although we won't be dealing with this |
| 7 | issue specifically until August 1st, we |
| 8 | think that it is important that we at |
| 9 | least pass out the information we have |
| 10 | available and say that we've been talking |
| 11 | to the Chairman about maybe having |
| 12 | legislation where we make it |
| 13 | independent we make an independent |
| 14 | function of safety inspectors such that |
| 15 | they can't be hired by the company doing |
| 16 | the work, but they have to be |
| 17 | independent. And that way, we not only |
| 18 | become involved in helping to create |
| 19 | jobs, we make sure that there's an |
| 20 | independent inspector on the site for all |
| 21 | jobs so that people are protected. And |
| 22 | certainly the gentleman who has worked |
| 23 | hard on this, Mr. Jerry Vallery, Kaseen |
| 24 | Ali and those, would you stand. I know |
| 25 | you testify next time, but I at least |

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| 2 | want to recognize you. You've been at |
| 3 | every hearing, and certainly we |
| 4 | appreciate all that you've been doing to |
| 5 | try to come up with a program that can be |
| 6 | valuable to us. Thank you. Thank you |
| 7 | very much. |
| 8 | Mr. Chairman, thank you. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, |
| 10 | Councilwoman. |
| 11 | Do any other members want to |
| 12 | give opening remarks? |
| 13 | Councilman Henon. |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN HENON: I'm fine. |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman |
| 16 | Kenney. |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: No. |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Then let's |
| 19 | go. |
| 20 | What we will do next is, I will |
| 21 | ask Stacey Graham of my staff to describe |
| 22 | the slides that we are about to see and |
| 23 | then call the first panel of witnesses up |
| 24 | to testify as it relates to that. |
| 25 | THE CLERK: This is a slide |
| | |

| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 |
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| 2 | presentation providing background |
| 3 | information for a case study of a |
| 4 | hypothetical demolition at the Armory |
| 5 | Building located at 1221 through 31 South |
| 6 | Broad. |
| 7 | This photograph is an up-close |
| 8 | illustration of the front of the |
| 9 | building, a recent photograph. Notable |
| 10 | here is on-street parking. We can |
| 11 | observe from this photo several broken |
| 12 | windows, exposing the interior terrain |
| 13 | and other elements that may deteriorate |
| 14 | building materials and structure. |
| 15 | Here's a closer view of the |
| 16 | building on South Broad. There's high |
| 17 | traffic volume. |
| 18 | The view of the building here |
| 19 | highlights the height disparity in the |
| 20 | attached newer residential unit, which is |
| 21 | adjacent. |
| 22 | This photograph illustrates the |
| 23 | attached one-and-a-half-story occupied |
| 24 | clothing store with a shared wall to the |
| 25 | Armory Building. |
| | |

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| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 | |
| 2 | This photograph re-illustrates | |
| 3 | the height difference of the adjacent | |
| 4 | residential units, vehicular traffic, and | |
| 5 | parking on the street frontage as well as | |
| 6 | pedestrian use of the sidewalks. | |
| 7 | This is an aerial view of the | |
| 8 | building overlaid with property lines. | |
| 9 | This photograph illustrates that the | |
| 10 | building footprint does not perfectly | |
| 11 | align with the property lines. | |
| 12 | An aerial view shows that the | |
| 13 | close proximity of numerous residential | |
| 14 | units surrounding the Armory. There is a | |
| 15 | gas station located on the south of the | |
| 16 | building. | |
| 17 | This photograph illustrates the | |
| 18 | adjacent clothing store and the height | |
| 19 | difference. | |
| 20 | This photograph illustrates the | |
| 21 | adjacent newer building and the | |
| 22 | difference in the height. | |
| 23 | Again, the Armory Building is | |
| 24 | surrounded by residential units. | |
| 25 | This photograph also | |
| | | |

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| 2 | illustrates damage to the roof on the |
| 3 | frontage of the building. Again, there |
| 4 | are holes in the roof on the front of the |
| 5 | building and extensive damage elsewhere. |
| 6 | This building has been |
| 7 | classified by L&I as imminently |
| 8 | dangerous. There have been a number of |
| 9 | L&I violations issued on the property, |
| 10 | including a partial collapse of the roof |
| 11 | and cracks in weight-bearing walls. |
| 12 | This concludes my background |
| 13 | presentation of the hypothetical |
| 14 | demolition of 1221 South Broad for |
| 15 | today's case study. |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you. |
| 17 | Ms. Graham, a couple of things, if you'll |
| 18 | go back to the overview shot, yes. Did |
| 19 | we say how many square feet this building |
| 20 | was? Is that listed there? |
| 21 | THE CLERK: It may be in your |
| 22 | case study materials. |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So if L&I |
| 24 | were here, which they are not, we would |
| 25 | ask how would they calculate the permit |
| | |

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| 2 | that it would take to demolish this |
| 3 | building. If L&I were here, we would ask |
| 4 | how they would determine and how was it |
| 5 | determined that this building is |
| 6 | imminently dangerous. If L&I were here, |
| 7 | we would ask what their process would be |
| 8 | and what the requirement would be for |
| 9 | them to bring this building down by way |
| 10 | of occupied structures next to it. If |
| 11 | L&I were here, we would ask is the |
| 12 | traffic on Broad Street, how does it |
| 13 | compare to the traffic that was on Market |
| 14 | Street and to what degree. And I guess |
| 15 | we can ask the Streets Department how |
| 16 | that would impact their recommendation on |
| 17 | how that building would be demolished. |
| 18 | So without those actual |
| 19 | questions being asked, I would ask you to |
| 20 | call the first panel that will give us |
| 21 | some insight on how they would approach |
| 22 | this. |
| 23 | THE CLERK: The first panel |
| 24 | includes Alvin Davis and Dr. Robert |
| 25 | Brehm. |
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 2
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
                                       It's my
         understanding they're with Dr. Drexel
 3
         University?
 4
                   THE CLERK:
 5
                               That's right.
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
 6
                                       Thank you.
 7
                   Please approach the witness
         table, and thank you for coming.
         polite gentlemen. That's not the best
 9
10
         practice here in Council. We try to get
11
         to it.
12
                   (Witnesses approached witness
13
         table.)
14
                   COUNCILMAN JONES: So if you
15
         would, welcome and would you state your
16
         names for the record and please begin
17
         your testimony.
18
                   MR. DAVIS: Good morning,
19
         Council.
                   My name is Alvin Davis. I'm an
         operating engineer out of the Local 542,
20
21
         which we call our lead engineer for the
22
         operator 542. I have 36 years in the
         demolition industry doing such buildings
23
24
         as we have here on the board.
                                         I worked
25
         in the -- for my contractor and for
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| 2 | myself, over six years, and as I said, I |
| 3 | tore down some of the biggest buildings |
| 4 | in the City. Just to give you a quick |
| 5 | rundown, the old Navy Hospital, the |
| 6 | Convention Center down at 13th Street and |
| 7 | Arch. We've done the Spectrum, tore down |
| 8 | the old Byberry institution on the |
| 9 | Boulevard and the Connie Mack Stadium. |
| 10 | And, again, where Council said he worked |
| 11 | when he was just a young man. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: No. I |
| 13 | didn't work there. My dad took me there |
| 14 | once. I'm not that old. |
| 15 | MR. DAVIS: Well, you have some |
| 16 | memories there. |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Oh, at the |
| 18 | Vet. I worked at the Vet, but not at |
| 19 | Connie Mack. |
| 20 | MR. DAVIS: Okay. Well, we go |
| 21 | back a long ways for doing demolition in |
| 22 | the City. And as we said, this structure |
| 23 | here that you have here now, I can |
| 24 | certainly inform and give you some good |
| 25 | points and views in the best way to |

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| 2 | attack a project such as this. So once |
| 3 | he presents himself, then maybe we'll go |
| 4 | further. |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN JONES: We |
| 6 | appreciate you. This is your second |
| 7 | hearing that you've attended and given |
| 8 | insight to, and we appreciate your |
| 9 | volunteering to do this. Thank you so |
| 10 | very much. |
| 11 | MR. DAVIS: Certainly my honor. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN JONES: You worked |
| 13 | for the City, didn't you? |
| 14 | MR. DAVIS: No. I work for a |
| 15 | private contractor. |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: You were |
| 17 | here twice. That constitutes you for |
| 18 | benefits. |
| 19 | MR. DAVIS: Sounds good to me. |
| 20 | DR. BREHM: Good morning, |
| 21 | Council. My name is Robert Brehm. I'm |
| 22 | an associate teaching professor at Drexel |
| 23 | University. Prior to that, I spent about |
| 24 | 35 years in the construction industry, |
| 25 | building things and occasionally have to |

- 7/18/13 SPECIAL COMMITTEE RES. 130546 1 2 demolish things in the part of the 3 practice. I don't want to waste a lot of 4 your time talking about me. I think you 5 have my resume in front of you. 6 And I'm interested in my distinguished colleague to the right of me, hearing some of his 9 comments, and maybe I'll learn something today also. 10 11 COUNCILMAN JONES: I think it 12 would be helpful. Everyone that's 13 viewing this on television does not have 14 the benefit of reading your vitae. Ιf 15 you could touch on the salient points, I 16 think that would add to the discussion a 17 little bit. 18 DR. BREHM: Certainly. 19 Basically I've been in construction most 20 of my life. For seven and a half years, 21 I was with the State of New Jersey. was the Director of the Office of Design 22
- 25 and code compliance in the State of New

and Construction. I had all

23

24

construction -- all design construction

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| 2 | Jersey under my jurisdiction. I had 600 |
| 3 | projects at any one time, a staff of 108 |
| 4 | people. So I'm quite familiar with very |
| 5 | large public, high-profile projects. |
| 6 | I spent a short period of time |
| 7 | in the '70s at Rutgers University where I |
| 8 | established a nationally accredited |
| 9 | construction engineering management |
| 10 | program. I also was the chief resident |
| 11 | engineer for Kupper Associates. In that |
| 12 | engagement, I had a staff of over 200 |
| 13 | people, and we were responsible for |
| 14 | compliance, design compliance, with |
| 15 | environmental infrastructure that was |
| 16 | being done during the '70s. |
| 17 | I've also I had my own firm, |
| 18 | which I established in 1978. I sold it |
| 19 | in 1986. We were surety consultants. |
| 20 | What we did was step in where projects |
| 21 | were in trouble and we assisted the |
| 22 | sureties in developing workout |
| 23 | strategies. In the process, I also did a |
| 24 | number of high-profile cases in forensic |
| 25 | engineering. Last week, if you're |
| | |

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| 2 | familiar, I testified before the |
| 3 | Pennsylvania Senate and Assembly on |
| 4 | demolition. I've also this past |
| 5 | weekend I was in San Antonio, Texas |
| 6 | testifying in a matter with the Corps of |
| 7 | Engineers in a construction matter. So |
| 8 | I'm quite familiar with construction and |
| 9 | the processes that hopefully provide good |
| 10 | outcomes, but unfortunately have been |
| 11 | involved in investigating a number of |
| 12 | them where there have been some negative |
| 13 | outcomes. And we learn a lot from our |
| 14 | mistakes, and I made my share of mistakes |
| 15 | in 40 years. |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, as a |
| 17 | municipality, we hope to learn from our |
| 18 | mistakes as well and benefit from |
| 19 | standing on the shoulders of giants like |
| 20 | you two that have been doing this for |
| 21 | quite some time. |
| 22 | So without further adieu, |
| 23 | whichever one wants to approach this |
| 24 | project and this case study. |
| 25 | MR. DAVIS: If we put the front |
| | |

7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 1 2 picture back up, the face part of the 3 building. THE CLERK: This one? 4 5 MR. DAVIS: Yes. Can we see the adjoining existing buildings that's 6 7 going to stay as well. At least that's one of them. I can give you some sort of idea. 9 That will be good for there. 10 As you can see, the existing 11 store that's the building that's going to 12 stay, I'm going to give you the safest 13 way that I think that it should be torn 14 down and also I can give you a Plan B. 15 It depends on as well the contractor that may be awarded the job to do the job. 16 17 And as you well know, I suggested that a 18 job of this sort will be a reliable contractor that know about demolition to 19 20 do this particular job. 21 Now, my opinion is that the 22 adjoining building that is next to -- the building that is going to be demolished, 23 24 the adjoining building that's going to be 25 demolished and the existing buildings

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 2
         that's going to stay, we see the
 3
         three-story here on my right and the
         one-story will be on the left. Now, the
 4
 5
         building that's going to be demolished, I
         would be concerned about the one-story
 6
 7
         building here as well as the three-story.
         Now, let's stay here with the one-story.
 9
                   The one-story, what I suggest
10
         to be done to take this particular
         building down, plan number one is to go
11
12
         in the inside of the building, first of
13
         all. As we well know, we're concerned
14
         about the asbestos and everything is
15
         moved out of the building, water off, gas
         off, everything, all the utilities and
16
17
         everything been to the core where we can
18
         knock the building down.
19
                   I'm suggesting that we go in
         the inside, take all the floors of this
20
21
         side of the wall of the building that's
22
         next to that one-story, take all the
         floors out, from the first floor all the
23
24
         way up, even to take the roof off on this
25
         side of the building. Now, that whole
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         side of the building, that would be open
 3
         from the roof all the way down to the
         first floor. And you may say, Well,
 4
         what's the purpose of going inside when
 5
         you're going to tear the building down?
 6
 7
         The purpose is to go inside to open up
         the floors is because, as you well see,
         the four-story brick wall that is sort of
 9
10
         similar what happened some time ago, that
         brick wall that's going all the way up, I
11
12
         recommend that that be taken down by
13
         hand.
                And the reason why you open up the
14
         floors is that when you go there and take
15
         that wall down by hand, you dump the
         bricks in the inside of the building.
16
17
         The bricks goes in the inside of the
18
                    By all the floors being open,
         building.
19
         the bricks will go all the way down to
20
         the basement.
                        The reason why you don't
21
         want to leave the floors in if you knock
22
         the wall over, because if you leave the
         floors in when the bricks sits on the
23
24
         floor, by the weight of the bricks it
25
         will cause the wall to blow out.
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 2
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
                                       When you say
 3
         "blow out" --
                   MR. DAVIS:
                               It will blow out.
 4
 5
         onto that existing one-story building.
         If you have the bricks sitting on the
 6
 7
         floor, it would be too much for the floor
         to handle, so the floor will buckle and
         it will cause the wall to go outward
 9
         instead of inward.
10
11
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
                                       So by
12
         removing the floors, if there is a
13
         conflict of the wall, it's more likely to
14
         cave into the basement?
15
                   MR. DAVIS: Correct.
                                          Correct.
         So by moving all the floors on this side
16
17
         of the one-story existing building, open
18
         up all those floors all the way up, from
19
         the first floor all the way to the top
20
         floor, even to the roof, the length of
21
         that garage opening -- see the length of
         the garage opening? If you may look at
22
         the four windows, we will open that up.
23
         The floors open will be that wide of a
24
                  So when they go up there, rather
25
         length.
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| 2 | they working out of a man basket or |
| 3 | however they doing it, from a crane maybe |
| 4 | holding the guys in the basket, that they |
| 5 | can safely take that wall down. They |
| 6 | will push that wall in the inside. That |
| 7 | wall will come all the way down to the |
| 8 | level of the first floor level. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: I think I |
| 10 | know, but I'm going to ask the question |
| 11 | anyway. Why do you leave the remaining |
| 12 | floor intact beyond the width of the |
| 13 | opening of that garage? |
| 14 | MR. DAVIS: Why would you leave |
| 15 | that remaining floor intact? |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So you said |
| 17 | you open the floors. |
| 18 | MR. DAVIS: All the way up. |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN JONES: All the way |
| 20 | up to the width of the opening of that. |
| 21 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Tell us why |
| 23 | you keep the other part of the building |
| 24 | intact. |
| 25 | MR. DAVIS: Well, the other |
| 1 | |

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| 2 | part of the reason why, what we try |
| 3 | and do is separate that four-story away |
| 4 | from the one-story. So when you go in |
| 5 | there just say with a crane, you would |
| 6 | have enough space right there opening |
| 7 | that nothing else would be able to fall |
| 8 | onto that one-story existing building. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So the |
| 10 | remaining floor, does it brace the rest |
| 11 | of the |
| 12 | MR. DAVIS: Yes, it does. That |
| 13 | building would be it would be braced. |
| 14 | It won't collapse. |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN JONES: All right. |
| 16 | MR. DAVIS: Because of the |
| 17 | structure of the building on the inside. |
| 18 | So that would hold that part of the floor |
| 19 | up. |
| 20 | So if you go on the other side, |
| 21 | which is the three-story, and I'm |
| 22 | requesting that we would do the same |
| 23 | thing on the three-story. You will open |
| 24 | up from the first floor all the way up to |
| 25 | the roof. And all those bricks even |
| | |

7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 1 2 where that structure arc is on the side, 3 they will work from that side of the wall to push the wall into the building, 4 inside of the building, and all of those 5 bricks will go all the way down to the 6 That will safely protect that basement. three-story and that will safely protect the one-story. 9 10 Now, when those two side walls are down, now you have just the middle 11 12 Now we feel safe. You don't structure. 13 have to worry about a wall going out on 14 either side. You can feel safe. Now you can bring your equipment in, which I 15 recommend to be a crane to knock 16 17 something down on this order. 18 again, it would have to be questioned on 19 the contractor what type of equipment 20 will he be using. My recommendation by 21 the experience that I have suggests that 22 it would be a crane to take that side of 23 the building down. Only because a crane have more what you would call control 24 25 when you knocking something down of that

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| 2 | sort versus an excavator or something of |
| 3 | that sort. The crane clam bucket have |
| 4 | more control of a building than any other |
| 5 | type of equipment there that is out here, |
| 6 | especially something for that size. And |
| 7 | as you can well see, that by the |
| 8 | adjoining buildings on both sides and the |
| 9 | buildings that is behind, I can't see no |
| 10 | other piece of equipment getting in there |
| 11 | to do anything but a crane, because you |
| 12 | only have Broad Street to sit the |
| 13 | equipment on Broad Street. You're going |
| 14 | to have to be on Broad Street. |
| 15 | And you have stated when you |
| 16 | opened up your statement in reference to |
| 17 | what will the City do as far as blocking |
| 18 | that street, I would suggest that that |
| 19 | side of the street would probably have to |
| 20 | be closed. You see that I'm pretty |
| 21 | sure it's a subway that runs on Broad |
| 22 | Street. I'm suggesting also that they |
| 23 | need to take into consideration that if |
| 24 | there is a subway there, they need to put |
| 25 | road plates on top of the subway vents |

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| 2 | before they knock the building down to |
| 3 | protect the subway, put the road plates |
| 4 | on top of the vents, and then on top of |
| 5 | the road plates, they need to put dirt on |
| 6 | top of them. That will take the impact |
| 7 | of the bricks when the bricks are falling |
| 8 | down from the building when it hits the |
| 9 | ground. It will help protect the subway |
| 10 | as well. But I don't know whether all |
| 11 | that was taken into consideration. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN JONES: The Chair |
| 13 | by the way, we've been joined by |
| 14 | Councilwoman Cindy Bass. Thank you for |
| 15 | being a part of this. |
| 16 | Councilman Kenney. |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, |
| 18 | Mr. Chairman. |
| 19 | Could you talk a little bit |
| 20 | about during all this process you'd be |
| 21 | going through in hand demolishing the |
| 22 | north and south ends of the building. |
| 23 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. |
| 24 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What kind |
| 25 | of interaction and this is a private |
| | |

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| 2 | demolition, right? |
| 3 | MR. DAVIS: Right. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: This is |
| 5 | privately owned property. What |
| 6 | interaction would you expect to have with |
| 7 | City officials, whether they be License |
| 8 | and Inspection officials or Streets |
| 9 | Department officials or even other quasi |
| 10 | governmental agencies like SEPTA and |
| 11 | those? I mean, is there initial |
| 12 | engagement or is there ongoing |
| 13 | communication? What goes on? |
| 14 | MR. DAVIS: Well, the main |
| 15 | thing, the contractor that is awarded the |
| 16 | job, his primary responsibility is to |
| 17 | make sure with the City, with L&I, with |
| 18 | the utilities. That's the contractor |
| 19 | responsibility, to make sure that he have |
| 20 | all his bases covered before he demolish |
| 21 | the building. He would have to interact |
| 22 | with everyone. |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So it's the |
| 24 | initiative of the general contractor |
| 25 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. |
| | |

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: to |
| 3 | interface with gas, water, SEPTA |
| 4 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: PECO? |
| 6 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And if they |
| 8 | don't do that, in an instance where it's |
| 9 | not a reputable contractor and they're |
| 10 | taking a building down, it's a private |
| 11 | structure and that interaction, beyond |
| 12 | the issuance of a permit, doesn't happen, |
| 13 | what would you recommend we change to |
| 14 | require that to happen? |
| 15 | MR. DAVIS: Well, I would |
| 16 | require that before the contractor is |
| 17 | awarded the job, if he's awarded the job, |
| 18 | to request that he have all that done. |
| 19 | That should be written in writing. |
| 20 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But if you |
| 21 | have an owner that doesn't require it and |
| 22 | a GC that doesn't do it, where does the |
| 23 | City, after the permit goes across the |
| 24 | desk, where is the City's responsibility, |
| 25 | in your view, during the course of the |
| | |

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| 2 | job, especially in the critical parts of |
| 3 | the north and south demolition, what's |
| 4 | the City's role? Is it non-existent? |
| 5 | MR. DAVIS: It's non-existent. |
| 6 | Now, as Councilman said, since I'm on the |
| 7 | payroll I've been here two days, put |
| 8 | me on the payroll I'll make sure it's |
| 9 | done. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you |
| 11 | believe that at some point in time and |
| 12 | have you been on jobs in the past where |
| 13 | you're a reputable contractor, you |
| 14 | followed all the rules, you've gotten |
| 15 | your permits and all your sign-offs, have |
| 16 | you seen as a City official in some |
| 17 | capacity L&I or whoever been by to say, |
| 18 | How's it going, take a look? |
| 19 | MR. DAVIS: Yeah. Well, see, |
| 20 | L&I may come by, and their responsibility |
| 21 | to them is to just make sure that you |
| 22 | have your permit. L&I may come by. They |
| 23 | may not have demolition experience. They |
| 24 | may not know what safety precautions to |
| 25 | tell you to take. They may not know all |

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| 2 | that. The only thing they want to make |
| 3 | sure, you got your permit? Yes. You got |
| 4 | your water and everything off? Yes. And |
| 5 | we have seen some contractors go on jobs |
| 6 | such as this and the electric still be |
| 7 | on. What do he do? I won't say what he |
| 8 | do. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So you |
| 10 | believe there should be more involvement |
| 11 | on a regular basis with |
| 12 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: the |
| 14 | City? Because, I mean, the City issues a |
| 15 | permit. It's implied in the permit |
| 16 | issuance that we are giving you |
| 17 | permission to do something in the public |
| 18 | right-of-way. |
| 19 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. |
| 20 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So what |
| 21 | you're recommending is is there be more |
| 22 | closer and stricter interface with agency |
| 23 | or agencies |
| 24 | MR. DAVIS: Right. |
| 25 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: to |
| | |

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| 2 | determine whether the work is going the |
| 3 | right way? |
| 4 | MR. DAVIS: I recommend that. |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. |
| 6 | Thank you. |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, |
| 8 | Councilman Kenney. |
| 9 | The Chair recognizes |
| 10 | Councilwoman Blackwell. |
| 11 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank |
| 12 | you. |
| 13 | What in your experience is the |
| 14 | role of the safety inspectors and when do |
| 15 | they start work? |
| 16 | MR. DAVIS: Well, my role is to |
| 17 | make sure that, first of all, that the |
| 18 | whole surrounding of that whole job is |
| 19 | secured and safe before any work begin. |
| 20 | And that is to make sure to go around |
| 21 | to make sure from the front, to the back, |
| 22 | to the subway, to the pedestrians, to the |
| 23 | neighbors that are across the street is |
| 24 | to give a whole outline of what we need |
| 25 | to do to protect and make sure everyone |
| | |

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 1
 2
         is protected before the demolishing
 3
         occur.
                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
 4
                                             Tn
         your experience, are they on the site
 5
         from morning to evening or whenever the
 6
         job is finished and on all the jobs?
                   MR. DAVIS: No.
                                    And here we go
 9
                 We drop the ball. It's relying
         again.
                             If the contractor
10
         on the contractor.
11
         doesn't insist it, it won't be done,
12
         unfortunately. I'm sorry to tell you.
13
         As I said, I've been out here for 36
14
         years and we knocked down some of the
15
         biggest buildings in the City, and it was
16
         left up to me. I had to really take into
17
         consideration what I need to do to
18
         protect and to make sure that I harm
19
         nobody, make sure everything is done
20
         safe. We know the repercussions if
21
         something was to go wrong. So it
22
         automatically kicks in by us having
         experience what we need to do. Even if
23
24
         nobody out here to take me by the hand to
         make sure that I do it, I know what need
25
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| 2 | to be done being out here with experience |
| 3 | that I have. And as I said, most of them |
| 4 | are not there to oversee to make sure |
| 5 | that it's done. It takes the experience |
| 6 | of the contractor and the competent of |
| 7 | the person that is doing the job to make |
| 8 | sure everything is protected. |
| 9 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: In |
| 10 | your experience, do they know what has to |
| 11 | be done? Do they know what their job as |
| 12 | safety inspector is? It's just a matter |
| 13 | that they may not be there because they |
| 14 | may be part of the company that hires. |
| 15 | MR. DAVIS: Yes, they know. |
| 16 | They definitely know. |
| 17 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay. |
| 18 | Thank you. |
| 19 | Thank you, Mr. Chairman. |
| 20 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, |
| 21 | Councilwoman. |
| 22 | This is really, I mean, scary. |
| 23 | MR. DAVIS: Certainly. |
| 24 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Is the only |
| 25 | word. I mean, I'm going to recognize |
| | |

- 1 7/18/13 SPECIAL COMMITTEE RES. 130546
 2 Councilman Henon shortly, but you guys
 3 are ethical. What happens if the
 4 company's profit motive is less is more
- 5 by way of safety? I mean, the citizens
- 6 are in danger.
- 7 MR. DAVIS: True.
- 8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Would you
- 9 say that?
- MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. Yes,
- 11 sir. Definitely.
- 12 COUNCILMAN JONES: The Chair
- 13 recognizes Councilman Henon.
- 14 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
- 15 Mr. Chairman.
- Mr. Davis, good morning. Thank
- 17 you. And your experience seems to be
- impeccable with some of the projects you
- 19 have done in the past, which I'll touch
- 20 on in a second.
- When it comes to safety, we're
- here today, we're talking about
- intergovernmental cooperation or
- 24 collaboration from a contractor's
- 25 standpoint. Let's just start off by

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| 2 | saying if the government agencies are not |
| 3 | communicating with each other, and you |
| 4 | had indicated that you go on some of |
| 5 | the jobs that you've worked on before or |
| 6 | responsible for where you had some of the |
| 7 | utilities are still on and you're in the |
| 8 | process of right in the process of |
| 9 | demolition, I would imagine that causes a |
| 10 | contractor it raises the price for |
| 11 | demolition, because we're not talking to |
| 12 | each other. |
| 13 | MR. DAVIS: Right. |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Is that |
| 15 | correct? |
| 16 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And that's |
| 18 | in addition to putting the workforce and |
| 19 | the public in a bad safety position; is |
| 20 | that correct? |
| 21 | MR. DAVIS: That is correct. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN HENON: I want to |
| 23 | talk about training. So also you have a |
| 24 | cost factor with departments not talking |
| 25 | to each other. In your experience in |
| | |

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| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 | |
| 2 | demolition, we need to submit a plan. So | |
| 3 | everything you discuss in your opening | |
| 4 | remarks, which was pretty good and | |
| 5 | detailed, that would be in the form of a | |
| 6 | submittal for the planned demolition when | |
| 7 | you apply for the initial permit; is that | |
| 8 | correct? | |
| 9 | MR. DAVIS: Right. Right. | |
| 10 | Yes. | |
| 11 | COUNCILMAN HENON: So without | |
| 12 | that, so for a planned structural | |
| 13 | demolition or I don't know if you need | |
| 14 | one for all demolitions, but for those | |
| 15 | that are required and I think at this | |
| 16 | point now because of the recent, let's | |
| 17 | just say, the tragedies that have taken | |
| 18 | place here in the City, we should have a | |
| 19 | plan for all demolition. | |
| 20 | MR. DAVIS: We should. | |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN HENON: So we submit | |
| 22 | a plan, and we need a workforce that are | |
| 23 | trained to execute that plan. | |
| 24 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. | |
| 25 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Safety for | |
| | | |

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| 2 | not just themselves but the public. |
| 3 | MR. DAVIS: Right. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And |
| 5 | equipment and buildings next door. |
| 6 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN HENON: So there |
| 8 | is I mean, how much do you see in your |
| 9 | experience have there been a lack of |
| 10 | communication with utilities? So is |
| 11 | there a percentage of times where you can |
| 12 | generally just say, hey, you know, 30 |
| 13 | percent of the time I go on a job and I |
| 14 | find the electric is still on or I find |
| 15 | that the site hasn't been surveyed by |
| 16 | Call One the Call One service or some |
| 17 | of the utilities here in the City such as |
| 18 | the Water Department or the Gas |
| 19 | Department? I mean, we've had recent |
| 20 | explosions for different reasons, and not |
| 21 | knowing what you're looking for or |
| 22 | looking out for can also be dangerous. |
| 23 | MR. DAVIS: Right. That's |
| 24 | true. Percentage I would say, the gas |
| 25 | has been perfect, because that's one of |
| | |

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| 2 | our most concerns, because none of us go |
| 3 | on the job, we don't want to get harm or |
| 4 | hurt. You doing a building of that size, |
| 5 | you can imagine what kind of gas pipes |
| б | are going into there. So we normally |
| 7 | usually check just to make sure. Even if |
| 8 | we've been informed that the gas was off, |
| 9 | we do a visual check to make sure that |
| 10 | the gas is disconnected, no pipes are |
| 11 | coming in from the street into the |
| 12 | building that's related. |
| 13 | But the electric and the water |
| 14 | I say may be a 40 percent problem all the |
| 15 | time. We go to a building and the |
| 16 | electric will still be on. You know, a |
| 17 | contractor look at it, say, Well, we're |
| 18 | losing money, we're here, we got to knock |
| 19 | the building down. We'll call the |
| 20 | electric company. Most times they'll get |
| 21 | the person, electric will be out there |
| 22 | within a day or two. But electric and |
| 23 | water water is not what we call a |
| 24 | major, major problem because we can |
| 25 | control the water to some degree, but the |
| | |

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| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 | |
| 2 | electric and the water I'll say maybe 30 | |
| 3 | to 40 percent most times. | |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And the onus | |
| 5 | is on the general contractor to | |
| 6 | coordinate with the City? How does that | |
| 7 | work? Does the contractor have to call | |
| 8 | the Water Department? | |
| 9 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. | |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Each | |
| 11 | utility? | |
| 12 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. | |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN HENON: L&I? | |
| 14 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. | |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And all the | |
| 16 | other departments, the Streets | |
| 17 | Department, and making sure that we have | |
| 18 | proper permits | |
| 19 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. | |
| 20 | COUNCILMAN HENON: to keep | |
| 21 | the general public safe? | |
| 22 | MR. DAVIS: Right. The | |
| 23 | contractor will do that. And if the | |
| 24 | water is left on, the contractor will | |
| 25 | call the Water Department to have it | |
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| turned off. We wouldn't call L&I to have |
| L&I to turn it off. If the electric is |
| on, we call the electric company, and the |
| electric company will come out and turn |
| it off. |
| COUNCILMAN HENON: So if |
| there's lack of communication or |
| coordination with any departments and it |
| would cause a delay, would the demolition |
| stop until that department comes out |
| MR. DAVIS: Yes. |
| COUNCILMAN HENON: and |
| inspects or shuts off? |
| MR. DAVIS: Yes. Yes. We |
| won't continue to go on. It will stop |
| until everything is turned off. |
| COUNCILMAN HENON: In your |
| experience, I mean, some of the major |
| demolitions you have done is impressive. |
| You talked about Byberry. I know |
| Councilman Kenney has talked about |
| buildings before a certain year having |
| been built, fit-out with asbestos, ridden |
| with asbestos all over the place. |
| |

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| 2 | MR. DAVIS: True. |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Byberry |
| 4 | being a perfect example of that. |
| 5 | MR. DAVIS: Yes, it would. |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN HENON: So having a |
| 7 | plan that is submitted with a trained |
| 8 | workforce, would know what to look out |
| 9 | there and take the proper safety |
| 10 | precautions for so if you did a demo |
| 11 | on Byberry and you had a workforce that |
| 12 | wasn't knowledgeable and they were just |
| 13 | hired for the day to take bricks out and |
| 14 | something happened and there was a |
| 15 | something happened and it was full of |
| 16 | asbestos, what happens in that case? |
| 17 | MR. DAVIS: Well, you would |
| 18 | have to stop the job. You would stop the |
| 19 | job and we would notify L&I. We would |
| 20 | notify the person that was supposed to do |
| 21 | the abatement on that particular site if |
| 22 | asbestos was still left and we discovered |
| 23 | that we had some. That site will be shut |
| 24 | down. And, as I said, it's up to the |
| 25 | contractor again to make sure that he |
| | |

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| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 |
| 2 | would take the responsibility and shut it |
| 3 | down for the safety of the workers and |
| 4 | the area. |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman |
| 6 | Henon's line of questioning is intriguing |
| 7 | at best and scary at worst. We're |
| 8 | talking about people and I'm going to |
| 9 | hit this point again that have ethics. |
| 10 | So that if public safety is at the heart |
| 11 | of what you do, whether it's what |
| 12 | happens when people aren't self-governed, |
| 13 | aren't honorable, aren't I mean, what |
| 14 | is the potential there? Give us that |
| 15 | side of it as well. So I know what you |
| 16 | would do, but what do some people do? |
| 17 | MR. DAVIS: Well, they would do |
| 18 | just the opposite of what we would do. |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Elaborate, |
| 20 | please. |
| 21 | MR. DAVIS: They would keep |
| 22 | going. |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So whether |
| 24 | there was an electrical power situation, |
| 25 | they would just demolish? |
| | |

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| MR. DAVIS: Some of them will |
| cut the power off themself. They will go |
| down and move the meter to keep the |
| electric from going into the building. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: What kind of |
| potential danger does that represent? |
| MR. DAVIS: Very high risk. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: In what way? |
| MR. DAVIS: In the way of |
| getting electrocuted, because none of us |
| are inclined to be electricians. We |
| don't know which way electric is coming |
| into the building. Just because we see a |
| meter doesn't mean that that's the only |
| entrance to power. |
| So we seen them take the meter |
| boxes out. We seen them cut the wire |
| themselves from the building. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: So if you |
| accompany that with water being on, what |
| kind of potential danger does that |
| represent? |
| MR. DAVIS: As I said, the |
| water is not a real danger. |
| |

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| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 | |
| 2 | COUNCILMAN JONES: With | |
| 3 | electric? | |
| 4 | MR. DAVIS: With electric, | |
| 5 | that's true. But most times, as I said, | |
| 6 | if you got a one-story or a four-story or | |
| 7 | five-story, both of them are dangerous, | |
| 8 | but we put them on different levels and | |
| 9 | we use our good judgment call. | |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN HENON: I just have | |
| 11 | a few more questions. So a general | |
| 12 | contractor or a contractor doing the | |
| 13 | demolition, are they required to submit a | |
| 14 | report to OSHA or fill out an OSHA report | |
| 15 | and turn it into submit it to the | |
| 16 | City? | |
| 17 | MR. DAVIS: It depends on the | |
| 18 | specs that's on the job. | |
| 19 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: | |
| 20 | Depends on what? | |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN HENON: The specs | |
| 22 | for the job? | |
| 23 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. Most time you | |
| 24 | get specs when you get a job from the GC. | |
| 25 | If the GC was in charge of the job and if | |
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| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 | |
| 2 | I came in as a contractor to knock the | |
| 3 | job down, the GC would have all the specs | |
| 4 | on that job, the requirements, what we | |
| 5 | should have and what we shouldn't have. | |
| 6 | So if it's OSHA regulated, then OSHA will | |
| 7 | come out and inspect to make sure that | |
| 8 | everything is done properly according to | |
| 9 | specs. | |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Maybe I | |
| 11 | misunderstood. I had thought that all | |
| 12 | demolitions would need an OSHA report, | |
| 13 | fill out an OSHA plan. | |
| 14 | MR. DAVIS: Not on all of them. | |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Structural | |
| 16 | only? | |
| 17 | MR. DAVIS: Yeah, on structural | |
| 18 | only. And then, as I said, something, as | |
| 19 | you well know, that have historical | |
| 20 | buildings that is known to have asbestos | |
| 21 | and different type of different | |
| 22 | environment regulations, then OSHA also | |
| 23 | would maybe be required to come out. | |
| 24 | COUNCILMAN HENON: In your past | |
| 25 | experience and you just mentioned old | |
| | | |

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| 2 | buildings. This is an old city. |
| 3 | MR. DAVIS: Right. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And I think |
| 5 | most of the buildings before what year |
| 6 | was that, Councilman Kenney? |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: 1980. |
| 8 | COUNCILMAN HENON: So a lot of |
| 9 | buildings were built prior to that, which |
| 10 | would hopefully require some OSHA report |
| 11 | to submit to the City of Philadelphia, in |
| 12 | addition to you mentioned electric, and |
| 13 | this is where I have firsthand |
| 14 | experience. You're certainly correct. |
| 15 | So if you get fly-by-night contractors or |
| 16 | a workforce which is unidentifiable, we |
| 17 | don't know where we get them, they may be |
| 18 | day workers with no experience, certainly |
| 19 | have no idea what a two-phase versus |
| 20 | three-phase, let alone single-phase |
| 21 | electrical service where you would have a |
| 22 | double feed into a building. |
| 23 | MR. DAVIS: True. |
| 24 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And the City |
| 25 | has two-phase Delta systems all over the |
| | |

7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 1 2 place, and it's extremely dangerous if 3 somebody is not trained --4 MR. DAVIS: True. 5 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- on the lookout. 6 So I think I hear some of your obstacles and challenges that you have out there on the field with either no or 9 10 lack of collaboration or people who act 11 irresponsible and working around 12 utilities or approvals from the City. 13 Not only does it cause delays, it puts us 14 all in danger. 15 MR. DAVIS: True, it does. 16 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you. 17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Councilman. 18 The Chair recognizes Councilman 19 20 Kenney. 21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 22 23 I'd like to get the opinion of 24 both witnesses to the following question. 25 I know in New Jersey a lot of times and

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 1
 2
         in Pennsylvania a lot of times also the
 3
         government requires a pre-qualification
         process for contractors, other design
 4
         professionals, architects, engineers.
         They need to be pre-qualified and on a
 6
         list of pre-qualified, acceptable
         candidates for selection to do public
 9
         work.
10
                   What is your view on
         pre-qualifying construction firms,
11
12
         general contractors, demolition firms so
13
         that we have on file, updated on an
14
         annual basis, the qualifications of the
15
         company, their financials, their training
         of their employees, their insurance
16
17
         requirements, all the things that a
18
         reputable company like yourself requires
19
         of yourself? What would be your opinion
20
         on the City imposing a pre-qualification
21
         list, that you can't get a permit in L&I
22
         unless for whatever work you're applying
         for a permit for unless that firm has
23
24
         been pre-qualified and renewed on an
         annual basis?
25
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| 2 | MR. DAVIS: I think that will |
| 3 | be a great proposal from the City to |
| | |
| 4 | present that, because right now it's |
| 5 | almost what we may call an open field, |
| 6 | and this is the reason why things are the |
| 7 | way they are now. If we had something on |
| 8 | that order, I believe it will scan out |
| 9 | the good and the bad. |
| 10 | DR. BREHM: I also echo that. |
| 11 | I'm a strong advocate of that. When I |
| 12 | was in New Jersey, we actually had a |
| 13 | pre-qualification of our specialty |
| 14 | contractors before they were allowed to |
| 15 | even bid the job. Whether you do that or |
| 16 | you qualify them at the time that they |
| 17 | submit a permit, it's essential. |
| 18 | It's easy to blame L&I or focus |
| 19 | on the public because you're visible, but |
| 20 | the truth of the matter is a contractor |
| 21 | is out there 24/7. You don't have the |
| 22 | time or the resources to have an |
| 23 | inspector on the job 24/7. So the |
| 24 | responsibility is primarily that of the |
| 25 | contractor. If you have a good |

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| 2 | contractor who is competent, he's going |
| 3 | to do it right. He has all the incentive |
| 4 | to do it right. If you have a contractor |
| 5 | that's not qualified, oftentimes they get |
| 6 | in trouble, not because it's intentional, |
| 7 | because they don't know better. And so |
| 8 | the contractor sometimes stays and I |
| 9 | don't want to say in the shadows, but |
| 10 | he's out of the public light. The |
| 11 | governmental inspectors and I had a |
| 12 | lot of really good ones worked for me |
| 13 | they're very conscientious, but they're |
| 14 | not there all the time and so they don't |
| 15 | observe everything. |
| 16 | So you really the primary |
| 17 | responsibility has to lie with a |
| 18 | competent and qualified contractor. |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And you |
| 20 | believe that process would provide an |
| 21 | up-front safety mechanism, that we |
| 22 | wouldn't have to go out and catch people |
| 23 | doing things, we would pretty much be |
| 24 | assured on a pre-qualified firm that they |
| 25 | were doing things the right way? |
| | |

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| 2 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. |
| 3 | DR. BREHM: Yes. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you. |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, |
| 6 | Councilman. |
| 7 | Just on that line of |
| 8 | questioning, does that mean that by |
| 9 | pre-qualifying, you've been set a |
| 10 | standard that we would hold that |
| 11 | reputable company to, but what are the |
| 12 | tangible things other than the honor |
| 13 | system that would be incentives? For |
| 14 | example, does the insurance, risk |
| 15 | management, play a part of why people |
| 16 | operate in a safe manner? |
| 17 | MR. DAVIS: Yes, it does. |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Could you |
| 19 | elaborate for the record. |
| 20 | DR. BREHM: All of that is part |
| 21 | of evaluating the qualifications of a |
| 22 | contractor. You want to look at his |
| 23 | safety record. I mean, we have a |
| 24 | workmen's comp law in every state that |
| 25 | I'm aware of, and we track their safety |
| | |

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| 2 | records. We can look at their financial |
| 3 | records, do they have the financial |
| 4 | resources to successfully do the job. |
| 5 | When people don't have financial |
| 6 | resources, they start trying to cut |
| 7 | corners. They don't pay their |
| 8 | subcontractors. The subcontractors don't |
| 9 | always show up on time, and also that |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So that's an |
| 11 | indicator? |
| 12 | DR. BREHM: That's an |
| 13 | indicator. Does he have the equipment |
| 14 | that's required to successfully |
| 15 | accomplish the work, does he have the |
| 16 | experience. If this is a 20-story |
| 17 | building and he's never demolished |
| 18 | anything other than a two- or three-story |
| 19 | building in a rural area, he doesn't have |
| 20 | the experience to work in an urban area |
| 21 | where the challenges that are facing an |
| 22 | urban area, particularly a high rise in |
| 23 | construction. |
| 24 | So all of these things have to |
| 25 | be looked at. And the record is there. |
| | |

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| 2 | The competent contractors have the record |
| 3 | to demonstrate their competency. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Does the |
| 5 | insurance company require a safety plan? |
| 6 | DR. BREHM: It will vary from |
| 7 | insurance company to insurances company. |
| 8 | My experience and I represent a lot of |
| 9 | insurance companies and sureties. I'm a |
| 10 | strong advocate of involving sureties |
| 11 | because they have a tremendous amount of |
| 12 | sophistication in evaluating the |
| 13 | competency and qualifications of a |
| 14 | contractor, because that's what they do |
| 15 | for a living. |
| 16 | Most of them, the ones that I |
| 17 | have worked for, the higher level |
| 18 | insurance companies, do require a safety |
| 19 | plan. That is the first thing in my mind |
| 20 | that the municipality, the contractor, |
| 21 | that everyone involved has to pay |
| 22 | attention to, and, that is, making sure |
| 23 | you establish a safe perimeter. That's |
| 24 | our number one responsibility. |
| 25 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So in what |
| | |

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| 2 | level of demolition would you recommend a |
| 3 | municipality requiring a safety plan? |
| 4 | DR. BREHM: For me it would be |
| 5 | all. |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN JONES: All of them? |
| 7 | DR. BREHM: Yeah. I mean, our |
| 8 | number one responsibility is to protect |
| 9 | the public. I'm a licensed professional |
| 10 | engineer. That's my number one priority |
| 11 | under our code of ethics, is to protect |
| 12 | the welfare and safety of the public. So |
| 13 | the first thing I do when I look at a |
| 14 | demolition is, I ask the contractor |
| 15 | what's your safety perimeter and how are |
| 16 | you protecting that. |
| 17 | But this particular building |
| 18 | has got a lot of challenges. That's one |
| 19 | of the first things I noted. One, it's |
| 20 | an older structure. That creates |
| 21 | challenges. Two, it's masonry. Masonry |
| 22 | tends to be brittle as it gets older. It |
| 23 | has challenges. And it's in a very |
| 24 | active area. You've got pedestrians, |
| 25 | you've got traffic, you've got adjacent |

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| 2 | structures. And it looks to me like on |
| 3 | the what I think is the west or the |
| 4 | back of the Armory, it looks like you |
| 5 | have some residential. It looks like |
| 6 | there's some residential. All of those |
| 7 | present challenges and responsibilities |
| 8 | of the contractor to protect. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So if you |
| 10 | were providing a safety plan for this |
| 11 | particular case study, what would you |
| 12 | recommend for this site? |
| 13 | DR. BREHM: Well, the first |
| 14 | thing I would do is create what I call a |
| 15 | safety perimeter. What's at risk, what |
| 16 | is that zone and what's something of that |
| 17 | risk. And then as the gentleman to my |
| 18 | right has indicated, there's a number of |
| 19 | things that we need to do. It may be |
| 20 | closing off sidewalks. It may be closing |
| 21 | off and I suspect that will happen |
| 22 | closing off the street, either cordoning |
| 23 | off part of it or closing the street. |
| 24 | But also you have some adjacent |
| 25 | structures. So we have to look at how |

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| 2 | we're going to protect those. |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: How would |
| 4 | you protect and, again, we're not |
| 5 | going back to past but going forward in |
| 6 | the future. How would you protect the |
| 7 | would you, A, would you recommend that |
| 8 | they be occupied or vacated? |
| 9 | DR. BREHM: That's something |
| 10 | I can't sit here today and give you a |
| 11 | detailed plan as to what I would do. I |
| 12 | can only tell you the things I would look |
| 13 | at. |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN JONES: What would |
| 15 | you |
| 16 | DR. BREHM: Certainly |
| 17 | evacuating them would be something that I |
| 18 | would look at. But we have |
| 19 | responsibility to protect the public, but |
| 20 | we don't necessarily always control their |
| 21 | lives and how they want to respond. I |
| 22 | did a project at Yale University and we |
| 23 | wanted to fly some of our components over |
| 24 | the historic theatre in Yale. We asked |
| 25 | them to evacuate. They said no. They |
| | |

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| 2 | had the right to say no. So we had to go |
| 3 | to Plan B. We had to change our method |
| 4 | of operation because we couldn't walk |
| 5 | away from our primary responsibility to |
| 6 | protect not only the structure but the |
| 7 | inhabitants. |
| 8 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Do nets or |
| 9 | platforms protect in the adjacent is |
| 10 | that something that is feasible? |
| 11 | DR. BREHM: Yes. |
| 12 | MR. DAVIS: Yes, it is. |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Could you |
| 14 | elaborate on those processes. |
| 15 | DR. BREHM: If you drive right |
| 16 | now up Chestnut or I guess down Chestnut |
| 17 | Street from Drexel University, we're |
| 18 | doing a 19-story building, and they built |
| 19 | platforms over the walkways to allow |
| 20 | myself and the students to enter the |
| 21 | building safely. So there is things like |
| 22 | that that can be done. You've got |
| 23 | windows that are in close proximity, that |
| 24 | falling brick that goes the wrong way |
| 25 | could penetrate. So you're going to look |
| | |

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| 2 | at things like maybe boarding up some of | |
| 3 | the windows or protecting them with | |
| 4 | safety nets or other means. There's a | |
| 5 | number of means that are available to | |
| 6 | protecting, one, the people, the public, | |
| 7 | and, second, the property, sort of in | |
| 8 | that order, but we have a responsibility | |
| 9 | to protect both. And we have the means | |
| 10 | and methods to do this. It's a matter of | |
| 11 | whether we have the will. | |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So those | |
| 13 | sub-components would be a part of a | |
| 14 | safety plan. | |
| 15 | DR. BREHM: Absolutely. | |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And that | |
| 17 | would be submitted to the municipality? | |
| 18 | DR. BREHM: I think that's | |
| 19 | essential. That's the first thing I look | |
| 20 | for when evaluating a contractor's | |
| 21 | operation, is what's your safety plan. | |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you. | |
| 23 | Councilwoman Blackwell and then | |
| 24 | Councilman Henon. | |
| 25 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank | |
| | | |

- 6 What is required? Do you have to -- my
- question is, when does L&I just stop by
- 8 and maybe see that something is lacking
- 9 or something is not lacking, and when is
- 10 all of the extra safety you do, for
- example, for this 19-story building in my
- 12 district that Drexel is doing? So who
- has the safety records and are they
- required to do so? Where does the rubber
- 15 meet the road?
- I mean, we know, for example,
- we had a judge walking by a building some
- 18 years ago -- and when Bennett Levin
- 19 testifies next time he'll mention it --
- some part of a building fell out, hit him
- on the head and killed him. So maybe in
- 22 that instance -- this is years ago. As
- the Councilman says, we can't go back,
- 24 but maybe if that street -- obviously if
- 25 the street had been blocked off, we would

7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 1 2 not have lost the judge. He was a 3 sitting judge. So, you know, when is it 4 required and to whom is it required? And 5 you said people can't afford safety 6 7 inspectors. Maybe we cannot -- maybe we can't afford not to have inspectors. 9 we had inspectors and a pre-qualification 10 list, it seems to me we would be covered, but the question is who is required to --11 where is it that and who is required to 12 13 have a list? What do you do? 14 So Drexel says we're going to 15 be extra safe, but what if somebody doesn't say we're going to be extra safe? 16 Who has all these records? What are the 17 laws or the rules where this is 18 19 concerned? 20 DR. BREHM: First of all, I 21 want to qualify something or clarify 22 something. I didn't say we don't need 23 inspection. We need inspection. What 24 I'm saying is we can't provide inspection 25 24/7. You can't put an inspector on

- 1 7/18/13 SPECIAL COMMITTEE RES. 130546 2 every job site?
- 3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Why
- 4 not? If it's just one person, why not?
- 5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Doesn't New
- 6 York do that?
- 7 DR. BREHM: No.
- 8 COUNCILMAN JONES: What is --
- 9 I'm sorry.
- 10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It's
- 11 all right. Go ahead.
- 12 COUNCILMAN JONES: It's my
- understanding -- they don't have safety
- 14 officers?
- DR. BREHM: That's not my
- point. They have safety officers. They
- have inspectors. Every jurisdiction I've
- 18 worked in -- and it's been up and down
- 19 the East Coast -- have inspections, have
- 20 code officials for code compliance. The
- 21 difference is they're not on the job
- 22 24/7. The contractor is on the job 24/7.
- 23 It doesn't mean there's not regular and
- 24 periodic inspections. What I'm saying is
- it's not standard practice in the

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| 2 | industry, and I'm not advocating that you |
| 3 | would put an inspector on every job |
| 4 | eight, nine, ten hours a day. I'm not |
| 5 | walking away or suggesting that we not |
| 6 | have it. We should have a very robust |
| 7 | inspection. One of the things that I |
| 8 | testified last week as part of, I think |
| 9 | it was, Bill 1561 in the State Assembly |
| 10 | was to create a fund to train the |
| 11 | inspectors, and I think that's something |
| 12 | that's an exceptional opportunity for us, |
| 13 | because we want to put inspectors out |
| 14 | there that know what they're looking at, |
| 15 | and that requires training. And I'm a |
| 16 | strong advocate of that. |
| 17 | So I'm not walking away backing |
| 18 | off of the requirement for that. In |
| 19 | fact, we need more of a robust one. It's |
| 20 | just no matter how robust it's going to |
| 21 | be, you're not going to be there $24/7$. |
| 22 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What |
| 23 | about the length of the job? Let's say |
| 24 | if the job is an eight-hour job and if it |
| 25 | ends, then it seems to me a safety |
| | |

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| 2 | inspector should make sure that it's |
| 3 | secure so that nothing can happen until |
| 4 | they return the next day. It seems to me |
| 5 | one employee shouldn't bust the job, one |
| 6 | inspector. Why wouldn't that be or I |
| 7 | mean, I don't know this stuff, so I only |
| 8 | know what you all explain to me. So why |
| 9 | couldn't that be worked into the cost of |
| 10 | the job. |
| 11 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just point |
| 12 | of information. |
| 13 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: |
| 14 | Certainly. |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: We talked |
| 16 | about New York. New York requires that |
| 17 | the contractor or the developer, the |
| 18 | owner, appoint a qualified safety |
| 19 | inspector to be on site when construction |
| 20 | or demolition is going on. So it's not a |
| 21 | New York City code person. It is a |
| 22 | person designated and trained and |
| 23 | assigned the responsibility of being an |
| 24 | on-site safety professional as part of |
| 25 | the GC or hired by the developer or owner |
| | |

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| 2 | to be there. So that's the constant |
| 3 | presence, but it's provided by the person |
| 4 | doing the people doing the work. |
| 5 | DR. BREHM: That is very common |
| 6 | that a and usually it's somebody that |
| 7 | has a is OSHA certified designated as |
| 8 | the safety officer. And that person is |
| 9 | there because he is an employee of the |
| 10 | contractor. My distinction is that |
| 11 | versus a public official. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, |
| 14 | Councilman Kenney. |
| 15 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: My |
| 16 | suggestion is that we hire people and |
| 17 | that they be not company people. They |
| 18 | have to be independent inspectors so the |
| 19 | contractor and the contract manager or |
| 20 | developer can't say, Well, we need you to |
| 21 | work on this job, not just stand around |
| 22 | while we're working these eight hours, or |
| 23 | whatever the situation is. It seems to |
| 24 | me if we could come up with what |
| 25 | Councilman Kenney is saying about a |
| | |

7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 1 2 pre-qualification list and come up with 3 safety inspectors who are independent people and who are trained independently, 4 who don't work narrowly for the 5 contractor, they can be paid by the 6 7 contractor, but they have to be independent people who work on the job, maybe we help with safety. 9 10 Mr. Davis. 11 MR. DAVIS: Councilwoman 12 Blackwell, I agree with you 100 percent 13 on that order. That is the best way that 14 I think should be handled, because, as 15 you said, the average inspectors are not on the job 24/7. We can make it possible 16 17 that someone can be out there. If you 18 had this particular project going on in 19 the City, you would want someone there 20 that with experience in the demolition 21 field to make sure that maybe what the 22 contractor isn't noticing or what 23 somebody else may not see, that this 24 inspector would be there, yeah, eight 25 hours a day. If it would be two months,

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| 2 | he would be there for two months eight | |
| 3 | hours a day for the high risk that is | |
| 4 | involved. Certainly it would be worth | |
| 5 | the cost to do it. | |
| 6 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank | |
| 7 | you. | |
| 8 | Thank you, Mr. Chairman. | |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, | |
| 10 | Councilwoman. | |
| 11 | On her point, the rain falls on | |
| 12 | the just and the unjust alike. | |
| 13 | MR. DAVIS: That's right. | |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So really | |
| 15 | these rules don't really apply to people | |
| 16 | who have ethics, morals, and standards. | |
| 17 | What we're really regulating is those | |
| 18 | that don't. So it's almost like asking | |
| 19 | the chicken the fox to guard the | |
| 20 | chicken coop, on the honor system. | |
| 21 | MR. DAVIS: True. | |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So | |
| 23 | Councilwoman's point is that we may need | |
| 24 | an independent entity that the cost is | |
| 25 | assumed by the developer that comes out | |
| | | |

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| 2 | there and is on the public's side and not | |
| 3 | necessarily driven by profit motive. | |
| 4 | MR. DAVIS: Right. | |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, | |
| 6 | Councilwoman. | |
| 7 | MR. DAVIS: Much needed. | |
| 8 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank | |
| 9 | you. And, again, I want to thank Mr. | |
| 10 | Vallery and Mr. Ali, who we've been | |
| 11 | talking and talking and talking and | |
| 12 | talking, and they say so many things, and | |
| 13 | at some point, you get what they're | |
| 14 | trying to tell you. | |
| 15 | MR. DAVIS: True. | |
| 16 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank | |
| 17 | you. | |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Mr. Vallery | |
| 19 | has been talking to me for a couple of | |
| 20 | decades. I had the opportunity to work | |
| 21 | with him, not he was in my employ, but | |
| 22 | because of his knowledge, I worked in | |
| 23 | part for him. So I know what you mean, | |
| 24 | Councilwoman. | |
| 25 | Councilman Henon. | |
| | | |

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you, | |
| 3 | Mr. Chairman. | |
| 4 | Doctor, OSHA, is it your | |
| 5 | understanding that OSHA an engineering | |
| 6 | survey needs to be submitted from OSHA to | |
| 7 | the City? Under OSHA guidelines, does an | |
| 8 | engineering survey need to take place? | |
| 9 | DR. BREHM: Not necessarily. | |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Not | |
| 11 | necessarily? | |
| 12 | DR. BREHM: No. I think as the | |
| 13 | gentleman to the right said, if it's in | |
| 14 | the contract documents, then it's a | |
| 15 | requirement, but it's not an OSHA | |
| 16 | mandate. | |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN HENON: It's not an | |
| 18 | OSHA regulation that an engineering | |
| 19 | survey needs to be submitted? | |
| 20 | DR. BREHM: No, sir. | |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN HENON: It does in | |
| 22 | structural and more complicated | |
| 23 | demolition cases or certain types of | |
| 24 | demolition? | |
| 25 | DR. BREHM: It's not an OSHA | |
| | | |

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| 2 | mandate. Obviously when you're doing | |
| 3 | something very complicated such as the | |
| 4 | structure that we're looking in the case | |
| 5 | study, it would be best practices for a | |
| 6 | contractor. | |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Best | |
| 8 | practices? | |
| 9 | DR. BREHM: Best practices, and | |
| 10 | I would expect a contractor to have hired | |
| 11 | an engineering firm or someone who was | |
| 12 | equivalent competency to evaluate that | |
| 13 | structure. | |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN HENON: So in the | |
| 15 | City, so when you have a structural | |
| 16 | engineer or a structural demolition, you | |
| 17 | need to submit a plan, beings that it's | |
| 18 | structural; is that correct? | |
| 19 | DR. BREHM: No. That's one | |
| 20 | thing I would advise, is that part of the | |
| 21 | permitting process is that a demolition | |
| 22 | plan be submitted. | |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Which | |
| 24 | includes a safety plan? | |
| 25 | DR. BREHM: Excuse me? | |
| | | |

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 2
                   COUNCILMAN HENON:
                                      Which would
 3
         include a safety plan?
                   DR. BREHM: Yes. Absolutely.
 4
         Safety is the number one concern, but the
 5
         demolition plan would also require, in my
 6
         mind and my recommendation, is be signed
         off by a structural engineer.
         Demolishing the building in some ways is
 9
         similar to building it. When we build a
10
11
         structure, we go through periods of
12
         instability. This building is stable and
13
         we're able to safely sit here because
         it's stabilized because all of the
14
15
         members are in place. When we build it,
         we have to do temporary bracing and other
16
17
         things to maintain that stability in the
         control of the structure. When we
18
19
         demolish it, we have to reverse that
20
         process. As we take a structure down, as
21
         the gentleman to the right indicated, we
22
         have to always be concerned with
23
         stability of the structure, because we
24
         are starting to remove components that
25
         provide that lateral stability. We have
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| | |
| 2 | to be careful and there has to be a plan |
| 3 | as to how we're going to remove the |
| 4 | stabilizing elements in a way that we |
| 5 | have a controlled demolition, that things |
| 6 | fall inward or in the direction that we |
| 7 | want them to fall or collapse as opposed |
| 8 | to outward or in a way that may cause |
| 9 | damage to adjacent structures. That |
| 10 | means that occasionally not only do we |
| 11 | have to look at how we take it apart, but |
| 12 | we also have to look at a plan to provide |
| 13 | stabilization in which may require some |
| 14 | temporary bracing, because we're removing |
| 15 | the permanent bracing that was in place. |
| 16 | It's like cutting a tree down. There's a |
| 17 | way we cut a tree down so that it falls |
| 18 | in the right direction. Same thing with |
| 19 | demolition. |
| 20 | COUNCILMAN HENON: I'm glad to |
| 21 | hear your recommendation since OSHA does |
| 22 | require some engineering surveys for some |
| 23 | demolitions. To what extent that is I'm |
| 24 | not sure, but they do require engineering |
| 25 | surveys. Since that has already taken |
| | |

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| 2 | place and with your recommendations, with |
| 3 | your experience and history, wouldn't it |
| 4 | benefit the City to have engineering |
| 5 | surveys submitted as well as safety |
| 6 | plans, as you already indicated? Do you |
| 7 | think it would drive owners to use |
| 8 | responsible contractors to keep the |
| 9 | general public and the workers in safe |
| 10 | keep them safe? |
| 11 | DR. BREHM: Unfortunately |
| 12 | I've been in the construction industry |
| 13 | literally all of my adult life and I'm |
| 14 | very proud of it, but unfortunately we |
| 15 | have some people who have different |
| 16 | ethical and moral standards than I have. |
| 17 | So you can't assume and should not assume |
| 18 | that somebody is going to do it right. |
| 19 | You have to have safeguards in place to |
| 20 | ensure that it is being done right. |
| 21 | In the permitting to take |
| 22 | down that building or any building in the |
| 23 | City of Philadelphia, you need a permit. |
| 24 | That's a gatekeeper. That's an |
| 25 | opportunity for you to vet the |

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| 2 | contractor, his plan of demolition and |
| 3 | his safety plan, his experience. So I |
| 4 | don't think that that's something that we |
| 5 | need to walk away from. I think that we |
| 6 | have to ensure that the permitting |
| 7 | process in Philadelphia or any |
| 8 | municipality, for that matter, ensures, |
| 9 | one, that there is a safety plan that's |
| 10 | in place that's been vetted to ensure the |
| 11 | protection of the public; second, that |
| 12 | there's a demolition plan in place signed |
| 13 | off by a structural engineer that |
| 14 | provides for a controlled demolition; |
| 15 | third, that we have a qualified |
| 16 | contractor that has the financial |
| 17 | resources, the technical competency to do |
| 18 | the job; and, fourth, that we have a |
| 19 | layer of inspection in place to ensure |
| 20 | compliance. |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN HENON: All right. |
| 22 | And I agree. And I was just reading in |
| 23 | preparation for this hearing here the |
| 24 | Architect's Handbook for Professional |
| 25 | Practices, 2006, where it has qualified |
| | |

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| 2 | demolition contractors, a |
| 3 | pre-qualification, prerequisite on some |
| 4 | of the things that you discussed, with |
| 5 | experience, companies' experience in |
| 6 | projects, references, safety record, |
| 7 | their bonding coverage and insurance |
| 8 | covered, which keeps most the honest |
| 9 | contractors provide that anyway, but |
| 10 | those who aren't, it kind of keeps |
| 11 | everybody with a framework that is fair |
| 12 | and equal and safe. So I think the |
| 13 | pre-qualifications that you have here, |
| 14 | that Councilman Kenney has been talking |
| 15 | about throughout this whole process, that |
| 16 | you have in place is a great |
| 17 | recommendation for the City. |
| 18 | I have no further questions. |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you. |
| 20 | Are there any other questions? |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: While you |
| 22 | were giving your answer, it reminded me |
| 23 | of a quote from a well-known architect |
| 24 | that I happen to know personally. It's |
| 25 | not what you expect that's important; |
| | |

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 2
         it's what you inspect that's important.
 3
         And I think that is a very simple way of
         making clear what it is we need to do.
 4
         We need to look at all this stuff and not
 5
         expect that people are going to do the
 6
 7
         right thing.
                   Thank you.
 9
                   MR. DAVIS:
                                That's true.
10
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
                                       I just have
11
         one other question, because we can't
12
         afford to keep you on beyond the hourly
13
         rate, but how often -- and, again, not
14
         talking about you, because you're
15
         ethical, but how often do we find
16
         companies coming into a building and find
17
         unexpected contaminants in the building
18
         and choosing not to recognize the
         dangerous nature of the contaminant and
19
20
         just bring it down?
                               Is that an issue?
21
                   MR. DAVIS:
                                I wouldn't say it's
22
         a real big issue, but it do happen,
         Councilman. I can't say what the
23
24
         percentage, but it does happen.
                                           As I
25
         said, it relies on the ethic of the
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| 2 | contractor and the person that's doing |
| 3 | the job. But I wouldn't say that it |
| 4 | don't, but it do. It's hard to put a |
| 5 | percentage on it, though. |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Is it true |
| 7 | that at one point asbestos was used in |
| 8 | the making of concrete? |
| 9 | MR. DAVIS: Yes. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Is it true |
| 11 | that a certain date at the age of a |
| 12 | building, you should expect the fact that |
| 13 | the concrete was made of asbestos? |
| 14 | MR. DAVIS: Certainly. |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Does that |
| 16 | contaminant not only endanger the worker |
| 17 | but also the take-home contamination? |
| 18 | MR. DAVIS: That's true. Other |
| 19 | family, yes. Certainly it does, because |
| 20 | it's in your clothing. |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm going |
| 22 | to try it again. So those kinds of |
| 23 | contaminants at a certain age of a |
| 24 | building are in the concrete itself. |
| 25 | MR. DAVIS: Correct. |
| 24 | building are in the concrete itself. |

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So when you |
| 3 | see these gentlemen, women bringing up |
| 4 | concrete and that dust is flying, it is a |
| 5 | reasonable expectation that there may be |
| 6 | a contaminant in it? |
| 7 | MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. |
| 8 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Not only |
| 9 | dangerous to the worker but to, when that |
| 10 | worker goes home, to his family. |
| 11 | MR. DAVIS: True. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Or when that |
| 13 | jogger who thinks he's doing the right |
| 14 | thing by exercising, fresh air and lungs |
| 15 | runs through that cloud of dust, that |
| 16 | there are unintended health consequences |
| 17 | that may be the result of that? |
| 18 | MR. DAVIS: It's there. |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm going to |
| 20 | leave it at that, but I want you to know |
| 21 | that we are very concerned about these |
| 22 | kinds of known dangers and unknown |
| 23 | dangers that have impact to the workers |
| 24 | but also impact to their families, |
| 25 | friends, and the citizens of the City of |
| | |

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 1
 2
         Philadelphia. So we're going to be
 3
         looking at those things. We'll put a pin
         in that for the future.
 4
                   Councilwoman Blackwell.
 5
                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
 6
                                             Yes.
         I would certainly like to agree with the
         Chairman on that issue. As having a
         parent who died from asbestos -- both
 9
10
         parents died of cancer, but my mother, we
11
         didn't check it, and both from issues
12
         that cause asbestos, we are really
13
         concerned about public safety, and even
14
         in issues where the laws have changed,
15
         but people are around concrete and other
         areas where they're doing construction
16
17
         and a person could walk by or be jogging
18
         and not realize that they're passing a
19
         scene and breathing and they think
         they're becoming healthy and they're
20
21
         becoming ill. I think if we do nothing
22
         else, we should be able to inform people
         about these things. We should be able to
23
24
         protect people, whether we close off an
25
         area, whatever it is, to make sure that
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| 1 | 7/18/13 - SPECIAL COMMITTEE - RES. 130546 | |
| 2 | people know even in many of these old | |
| 3 | buildings, as we all know, are the ones | |
| 4 | we have to tear down. So we know we're | |
| 5 | dealing with unsafe conditions, but we | |
| 6 | have to do what we can to protect people | |
| 7 | and their families so they don't have to | |
| 8 | lose parents and loved ones and members | |
| 9 | of the community or anyone to conditions | |
| 10 | that could have been prevented. | |
| 11 | MR. DAVIS: Right. That's | |
| 12 | true. | |
| 13 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank | |
| 14 | you. | |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, | |
| 16 | Councilwoman. | |
| 17 | I also note for the record that | |
| 18 | Councilman Denny O'Brien has joined us. | |
| 19 | Thank you, Councilman. | |
| 20 | Are there any other questions | |
| 21 | for these sets of witnesses? | |
| 22 | (No response.) | |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none, | |
| 24 | thank you so much for your input. | |
| 25 | MR. DAVIS: Thank you, | |
| | | |

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- 2 Councilman.
- 3 COUNCILMAN JONES: It will be a
- 4 part of our record and part of the
- 5 document that we produce as a result of
- 6 these hearings. Thank you. Thank you.
- 7 Thank you.
- 8 MR. DAVIS: My pleasure.
- 9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
- 10 you.
- 11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Will the
- 12 Clerk now read the names of the next
- 13 panel to testify.
- 14 THE CLERK: Dawn Tancredi.
- 15 (Witness approached witness
- 16 table.)
- 17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
- 18 much. Will you please state your name
- 19 for the record.
- MS. TANCREDI: Sure. Good
- afternoon. My name is Dawn Tancredi and
- I represent the owner of the Armory
- Building, which is the subject of today's
- hearing.
- 25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you

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| 2 | for coming in and testifying. Would you |
| 3 | like to testify? Do you have written |
| 4 | testimony? |
| 5 | MS. TANCREDI: Sure. I can |
| 6 | make some comments. And as you |
| 7 | mentioned, I'm here today at the request |
| 8 | of Council to answer questions about our |
| 9 | experience with the new demolition |
| 10 | regulations. I can tell you about the |
| 11 | timeline for this process, who was |
| 12 | involved in the process, and also comment |
| 13 | on streamlining the process. |
| 14 | There was a partial collapse |
| 15 | over the weekend of June 16th at this |
| 16 | building, and my client purchased the |
| 17 | property on June 17th. So my client is a |
| 18 | recent owner of this property. |
| 19 | Immediately an engineer came out to visit |
| 20 | the site on June 18th and recommended |
| 21 | that the building be immediately |
| 22 | demolished. The City also declared the |
| 23 | building ID. |
| 24 | On June 27th, we submitted a |
| 25 | demolition application pursuant to the |
| | |

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| 2 | new regulations. Thereafter we did |
| 3 | receive a comment letter from the City |
| 4 | with additional information that was |
| 5 | requested. And the response to the City |
| 6 | was submitted yesterday, and I can tell |
| 7 | you that the application is still missing |
| 8 | written consent from two property owners. |
| 9 | As far as |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm sorry. |
| 11 | Could you for the record tell us what is |
| 12 | on so within your experience, what was |
| 13 | on old applications and what was your |
| 14 | experience with this new application? |
| 15 | And pull the mic closer to you, please. |
| 16 | Thank you. |
| 17 | MS. TANCREDI: Well, I can tell |
| 18 | you previously we've pulled many |
| 19 | demolition permits, and the process was |
| 20 | certainly not as detailed as it is now. |
| 21 | There was minimal information that was |
| 22 | required. The application was completed. |
| 23 | The licensed contractor was identified, |
| 24 | and we submitted the application. |
| 25 | Now I can tell you the |
| | |

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| 2 | information that's been required for this |
| 3 | case, this information here was submitted |
| 4 | (indicating). |
| 5 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So there was |
| 6 | a simplified form and now a lot of trees |
| 7 | have died as a result of the changes? |
| 8 | There's a lot more paperwork? |
| 9 | MS. TANCREDI: Yes, there's a |
| 10 | lot more paperwork. Not only is there |
| 11 | more paperwork, there's more people |
| 12 | involved in the process. |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN JONES: How big is |
| 14 | that parcel? |
| 15 | MS. TANCREDI: This parcel is |
| 16 | 33,000 square feet. |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And how much |
| 18 | did the permit cost you, the demolition |
| 19 | permit? |
| 20 | MS. TANCREDI: We don't have |
| 21 | that information yet. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So you have |
| 23 | not been charged at this point or given |
| 24 | an assessment of what the fee would be? |
| 25 | MS. TANCREDI: No. I estimate |
| | |

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| 2 | the permit will cost approximately \$5,500 |
| 3 | to \$6,000 for the actual permit. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. |
| 5 | MS. TANCREDI: As far as who |
| 6 | was involved in this process, we had two |
| 7 | engineers. There was a structural |
| 8 | engineer who evaluated the building and |
| 9 | prepared a report. There's also a civil |
| 10 | engineer who prepared plans for the Water |
| 11 | Department, because this site is over |
| 12 | 15,000 square feet. We needed stormwater |
| 13 | management approval. |
| 14 | There was also the demo company |
| 15 | that prepared documentation. We've got |
| 16 | the attorney who streamlined all of the |
| 17 | materials, and I also contacted many of |
| 18 | the different departments. |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Which ones? |
| 20 | MS. TANCREDI: We had contact |
| 21 | with the Streets Department for a fence |
| 22 | permit. There was contact with the |
| 23 | Revenue Department for tax clearance. |
| 24 | There's contact with L&I to make sure |
| 25 | there's no outstanding violations. We |
| | |

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| were in contact with SEPTA because the |
| subway is affected. We also had contact |
| with the Philadelphia Water Department |
| for stormwater management approval. |
| There's also contact with utility |
| companies to make sure that the utilities |
| are shut off, and there's contact with |
| neighbors to obtain written consent. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: Did you |
| receive the consent from the neighbors? |
| MS. TANCREDI: We have not been |
| able to obtain the consent from a couple |
| of the neighbors at this point, and |
| that's the only outstanding item for this |
| application. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: Did you |
| produce a safety plan? |
| MS. TANCREDI: Yes. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: And what did |
| that safety plan, based on your proposed |
| demolition, entail? |
| MS. TANCREDI: It's very |
| detailed. The engineer prepared that |
| report. |
| |

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So when you |
| 3 | say all right. So are there any |
| 4 | contaminants within the building? |
| 5 | MS. TANCREDI: Are there any? |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there |
| 7 | any contaminants such as asbestos or old |
| 8 | concrete within the building? |
| 9 | MS. TANCREDI: Yes. Asbestos |
| 10 | is being removed. |
| 11 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So you have |
| 12 | that component. How do you plan to |
| 13 | approach, if you could go to the other |
| 14 | slide, the adjacent properties? How do |
| 15 | you plan to protect the retail clothing, |
| 16 | the residential properties in the back |
| 17 | and I think I don't know what the |
| 18 | other use is. The clothing store. How |
| 19 | do you plan to safeguard them? |
| 20 | MS. TANCREDI: Those are really |
| 21 | questions for the engineer. An engineer |
| 22 | would be a more appropriate person to |
| 23 | answer those questions. |
| 24 | COUNCILMAN JONES: But it's |
| 25 | contained within your safety plan? |
| | |

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| 2 | MS. TANCREDI: Yes. | |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: In addition, | |
| 4 | that safety plan is submitted to whom at | |
| 5 | this point? | |
| 6 | MS. TANCREDI: The safety plan | |
| 7 | has been submitted to the building | |
| 8 | examiner at L&I. | |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So is that | |
| 10 | something new? So that's a new part of | |
| 11 | the process? | |
| 12 | MS. TANCREDI: Yes. | |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So before if | |
| 14 | you were demolishing this property, it | |
| 15 | would not require you to have a safety | |
| 16 | plan? | |
| 17 | MS. TANCREDI: Correct. | |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there | |
| 19 | any questions of the panel? | |
| 20 | (No response.) | |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so | |
| 22 | much. | |
| 23 | MS. TANCREDI: Just a couple | |
| 24 | more comments. | |
| 25 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Please. | |
| | | |

| | | 9(|
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| 2 | MS. TANCREDI: Currently, | |
| 3 | buildings identified ID are not treated | |
| 4 | differently under the regulations. The | |
| 5 | Water Department has 15 days to review | |
| 6 | plans. L&I has 20 days to review. So | |
| 7 | those issues should be addressed | |
| 8 | because | |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Length of | |
| 10 | time? | |
| 11 | MS. TANCREDI: the question | |
| 12 | is how quickly should a building that's | |
| 13 | been identified as ID come down. | |
| 14 | Secondly, one of the biggest | |
| 15 | issues that needs to be addressed is the | |
| 16 | consent from the neighbors, because what | |
| 17 | happens if a neighbor will not sign off | |
| 18 | or if the neighbor is unavailable or on | |
| 19 | vacation? The City needs to be in a | |
| 20 | position to be able to issue permits. | |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN JONES: That's a | |
| 22 | good point. Define ID for the record, | |
| 23 | because we know what it is, but | |
| 24 | MS. TANCREDI: A building | |
| 25 | that's ID means that the building is in | |
| | | |

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 2
         imminent danger of collapse.
 3
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
                                      Also, does
         your insurance company require a safety
 4
         plan? Not really?
 5
 6
                   MS. TANCREDI: I don't know the
         answer to that.
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
                                       Okay.
                   Councilwoman Blackwell.
 9
10
                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
                                             Μy
11
         experience with ID buildings, when people
12
         call us and they say, I really am trying
13
         to fix up that building or can we delay
14
         it, and we call, and when L&I has said
15
         it's really dangerous, we always say
16
         fine. And I didn't know that when there
17
         was a problem for an imminently dangerous
18
         building, my experience is then the City
19
         moves forward to protect neighbors.
         have not seen an instance where we've had
20
21
         that kind of problem where a building is
22
         ID'd and they're ready -- it's the other
23
         issue. You try to get to the list to all
24
         the buildings that we run across in our
25
         daily work.
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| 2 | But my experience has been if |
| 3 | it's stickered, if it's listed, they're |
| 4 | always behind, but that they're pretty |
| 5 | clear on what's really dangerous when |
| 6 | they're to that point of where they're in |
| 7 | the demolition act. So I've never had |
| 8 | them say that some neighbor doesn't want |
| 9 | it and that building is going to hurt |
| 10 | somebody and they just hold up because |
| 11 | somebody is on vacation. I have not had |
| 12 | that we can all say many things about |
| 13 | L&I, but I've never had that experience. |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Any other |
| 15 | questions? |
| 16 | The Chair recognizes |
| 17 | Councilwoman Cindy Bass. |
| 18 | COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you. |
| 19 | Not for this particular testimony, but |
| 20 | just in general. Okay. My question was |
| 21 | really for you, Mr. Chairman. At the |
| 22 | last meeting that I was able to attend, |
| 23 | there was some question about former |
| 24 | commissioners and whether there was going |
| 25 | to be anyone who would actually attend |
| | |

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| 2 | and talk about how we got to this point, |
| 3 | because as I see it, there's really two |
| 4 | pieces of it. There's how we got to this |
| 5 | point this moment in time and what do we |
| 6 | do in the future to avoid having this |
| 7 | happen again. And so if we're going to |
| 8 | look back at the past, having a |
| 9 | commissioner who has only been there for |
| 10 | one year, I think that it really does |
| 11 | behoove us to talk to some of the folks |
| 12 | who have been in that spot before and |
| 13 | talk about what were the changes over the |
| 14 | years, what has happened, what could be |
| 15 | done better. Not to point fingers, but |
| 16 | really to drill down and figure out how |
| 17 | do we make sure this doesn't happen |
| 18 | again. |
| 19 | So I didn't know if you could |
| 20 | provide an update to us in terms of |
| 21 | what's happening there and what we could |
| 22 | expect, if they are going to be coming. |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN JONES: That's an |
| 24 | excellent question, Councilwoman, and the |
| 25 | answer is yes. Councilwoman Blackwell |

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| 2 | has reached out to a former commissioner |
| 3 | that will be testifying in the upcoming |
| 4 | hearings, and one of the other |
| 5 | commissioners, the more recent one, we |
| 6 | will reach out to, Ms. Burns, to try to |
| 7 | see if she will testify, but definitely |
| 8 | we have confirmed one former |
| 9 | commissioner. And having had some |
| 10 | preliminary conversations with him, I |
| 11 | think he has some insight to how this |
| 12 | problem one thing, and without |
| 13 | preempting him, is the concern that the |
| 14 | Department is in economic development as |
| 15 | opposed to under the aegis of public |
| 16 | safety. And when that shift happened |
| 17 | and that's not under this Mayor. This |
| 18 | happened before this Mayor that that |
| 19 | changed what the priority may have been. |
| 20 | And I'm not trying to draw a conclusion, |
| 21 | because that's why we listen to the |
| 22 | testimony, that's why we discuss things, |
| 23 | but there is a concern that public safety |
| 24 | first. Public safety first. But thank |
| 25 | you for that insight. |
| | |

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| 2 | COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Absolutely. | |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you | |
| 4 | for your testimony and taking the time | |
| 5 | out to come and explain this project to | |
| 6 | us. | |
| 7 | MS. TANCREDI: Thank you. | |
| 8 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you. | |
| 9 | Will the Clerk now read the | |
| 10 | next panel to testify. | |
| 11 | THE CLERK: Douglas Moser, | |
| 12 | Howard Neukrug. | |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN JONES: What are | |
| 14 | their departments? | |
| 15 | THE CLERK: PGW and Water | |
| 16 | Department. | |
| 17 | (Witnesses approached witness | |
| 18 | table.) | |
| 19 | COUNCILWOMAN JONES: Thank you, | |
| 20 | gentlemen, for your patience, ma'am. | |
| 21 | Please approach the witness table. Have | |
| 22 | a seat. I guess it's good afternoon now. | |
| 23 | MR. MOSER: Still morning. | |
| 24 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Still | |
| 25 | morning? | |
| | | |

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| 2 | MR. MOSER: Just barely. | |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And in no | |
| 4 | particular order, would you state your | |
| 5 | name and begin your testimony, please. | |
| 6 | MR. MOSER: My name is Douglas | |
| 7 | Moser, Executive Vice President and | |
| 8 | Acting Chief Operating Officer at PGW. | |
| 9 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: Howard | |
| 10 | Neukrug, Water Commissioner, City of | |
| 11 | Philadelphia. | |
| 12 | MR. MOSER: I've provided | |
| 13 | written testimony. You can at your | |
| 14 | pleasure. I can provide a synopsis of | |
| 15 | it, read it into the record or just take | |
| 16 | questions. | |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN JONES: How about | |
| 18 | you, Commissioner? | |
| 19 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: I've | |
| 20 | submitted testimony. Just to summarize | |
| 21 | very quickly, we're looking at water | |
| 22 | comes into play in a number of different | |
| 23 | ways in a demolition project. First and | |
| 24 | foremost, we allow the use of water from | |
| 25 | fire hydrants for dust control through | |

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| 2 | permit process. We have a shutoff we |
| 3 | do shutoff of the water service through a |
| 4 | discontinuance permit, and we have |
| 5 | erosion and sediment controls, and as the |
| 6 | lawyer spoke before, if it's a |
| 7 | redevelopment project over 15,000 square |
| 8 | feet, we also have requirements for |
| 9 | stormwater management. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So I guess |
| 11 | one of the things that as you heard |
| 12 | testimony here earlier and I know for a |
| 13 | fact that when we start talking about |
| 14 | major construction in the City of |
| 15 | Philadelphia, there is a committee under |
| 16 | the aegis of the Commerce Department that |
| 17 | comes together and kind of coordinates |
| 18 | things for the best interest of |
| 19 | development in the City of Philadelphia. |
| 20 | What I would ask you today is, is that |
| 21 | same kind of structure or committee given |
| 22 | to the demolition properties and, if so, |
| 23 | what level of properties? |
| 24 | MR. MOSER: Well, with PGW, as |
| 25 | part of the process, a contractor would |
| | |

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| 2 | be required to call into the PA One Call |
| 3 | system to notify them of a demolition |
| 4 | going on. PA One Call would then notify |
| 5 | us that that demolition is going on at a |
| 6 | site. We would then go out and survey |
| 7 | the property, and if we have a gas |
| 8 | service, we would have a crew designated |
| 9 | to go out and shut that off, terminate |
| 10 | that service prior to the demolition |
| 11 | occurring. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Does that |
| 13 | happen how would you characterize it? |
| 14 | Does this happen all the time, some of |
| 15 | the time or every now and then? |
| 16 | MR. MOSER: It's most of the |
| 17 | time I would characterize that as. |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And in what |
| 19 | occasions does it not happen? Have you |
| 20 | had occasions when that didn't happen? |
| 21 | MR. MOSER: I can't recall one |
| 22 | right now. |
| 23 | The other thing that we do is, |
| 24 | we work closely with License and |
| 25 | Inspection, that they also send us a list |
| | |

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| 2 | of proposed demolition. So we would also |
| 3 | go through our records at that point in |
| 4 | time to determine whether there is a |
| 5 | natural gas service to that property, and |
| 6 | prior to us even getting a One Call |
| 7 | notification, we would go out and |
| 8 | proactively segregate that from our |
| 9 | system. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: How often |
| 11 | does L&I provide PGW vacant property |
| 12 | lists that are to be demolished? How |
| 13 | often does that happen? |
| 14 | MR. MOSER: It's usually in the |
| 15 | every four to six weeks range. |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And how long |
| 17 | does it take from the time you get the |
| 18 | notification to you sending out an |
| 19 | inspection crew and coming back with a |
| 20 | satisfaction certificate? |
| 21 | MR. MOSER: We can typically do |
| 22 | that within a two-week window. But if we |
| 23 | know that there is a time certain when |
| 24 | the demolition is going to start, we |
| 25 | would be out there prior to the |
| | |

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| 2 | demolition. |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And how many |
| 4 | such inspections and service |
| 5 | disconnections has PGW performed last |
| 6 | year, let's say? Give me an estimate. |
| 7 | MR. MOSER: I would not even be |
| 8 | able to provide that. I can provide that |
| 9 | as a follow-up. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: I think |
| 11 | that's important, because we'd like to |
| 12 | juxtapose the number of permits we've had |
| 13 | to the number of inspections that we |
| 14 | have, and that will tell us something. |
| 15 | Similarly, how does the Water |
| 16 | Department interface? |
| 17 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: Well, |
| 18 | basically in order for a demolition |
| 19 | permit to be given from L&I, the Water |
| 20 | Department needs to first issue a |
| 21 | discontinuance permit, which is done by |
| 22 | the owner of the building coming to MSB |
| 23 | and paying a fee of \$100 and getting it. |
| 24 | It's called a D permit, and then the |
| 25 | Water Department will go out and shut off |
| | |

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| 2 | the water service to that system. Once |
| 3 | that water service is cut off, then there |
| 4 | are no longer any water or sewer bills |
| 5 | charged against the property. Until that |
| 6 | time, water and sewer service charges |
| 7 | continue. So that's one of the |
| 8 | incentives for the owner of the property |
| 9 | to move forward and do this action. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Has there |
| 11 | been occasions where demolitions have |
| 12 | caused damage to your particular |
| 13 | infrastructures? |
| 14 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: I am not |
| 15 | aware of that, but I'll find out and get |
| 16 | back to you on that. |
| 17 | MR. MOSER: I am also not |
| 18 | aware. As long as we're notified in |
| 19 | advance, then it would not. |
| 20 | COUNCILMAN JONES: I see |
| 21 | Councilman Henon's light lit, but I don't |
| 22 | see Councilman Henon. |
| 23 | So to answer the question, is |
| 24 | there a committee that meets or does this |
| 25 | happen independently almost on a routing |

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| 2 | slip by way of demolition permits and |
| 3 | then your interaction? |
| 4 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: Our |
| 5 | interaction is pretty much based upon |
| 6 | is triggered by request for demolition |
| 7 | permit or request for discontinuance |
| 8 | permit. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And can you |
| 10 | describe the water management process and |
| 11 | what the logic of that is by way of a |
| 12 | permit for water. |
| 13 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: There |
| 14 | are really two different water management |
| 15 | issues going on here. One is called an |
| 16 | E&S control, which is erosion and |
| 17 | sediment control. Basically that's any |
| 18 | construction site you see bales of hay, |
| 19 | you see filter bags or large gravel, all |
| 20 | to prevent the sediment from leaving the |
| 21 | site and getting into the streets and |
| 22 | then eventually getting into the sewer |
| 23 | system. That's called E&S controls, |
| 24 | erosion and sediment controls, and that's |
| 25 | typically required at all sites greater |
| | |

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| 2 | than 5,000 square feet earth disturbance. |
| 3 | And then there's another process that's |
| 4 | really triggered by the redevelopment at |
| 5 | 15,000 square feet, which looks at the |
| 6 | long-term stormwater management of the |
| 7 | site. So a building such as the one in |
| 8 | your case study that is being demolished |
| 9 | and rebuilt, as you heard from the |
| 10 | lawyer, there is significant amount of |
| 11 | work that's needed to be done to provide |
| 12 | to the Water Department to show that when |
| 13 | this building is rebuilt, they have at |
| 14 | least started the consideration of how |
| 15 | stormwater would be managed on site. |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And what is |
| 17 | your do you interact with any other |
| 18 | departments in this process currently |
| 19 | other than L&I, such as the Fire |
| 20 | Department, Streets Department, and how |
| 21 | is that interaction? |
| 22 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: Not |
| 23 | really at this point. |
| 24 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So those are |
| 25 | independent activities. Okay. |

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| 2 | Are there any other questions | |
| 3 | for this panel? | |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just one | |
| 5 | relative to gas connection. You guys | |
| 6 | have the capacity to know when a building | |
| 7 | is vacant or in disuse. You can tell by | |
| 8 | the amount of gas that's used or not | |
| 9 | used. | |
| 10 | MR. MOSER: Yes. | |
| 11 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you have | |
| 12 | a policy at all as to your people going | |
| 13 | out and looking at buildings, what their | |
| 14 | condition is? Because I would expect | |
| 15 | that a building that collapses on itself | |
| 16 | with an active gas line is a problem. | |
| 17 | MR. MOSER: That is correct. | |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And do you | |
| 19 | routinely turn off service from the | |
| 20 | street when a building over a certain | |
| 21 | age, over a certain length of time that's | |
| 22 | not been occupied or not been in use? | |
| 23 | MR. MOSER: We do a survey of | |
| 24 | the records to find out whether there's | |
| 25 | gas usage going into it. The difficult | |
| | | |

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| 2 | part is that there may be still an active |
| 3 | service, an active building, an active |
| 4 | customer who they may not have usage for |
| 5 | a long period of time, but still wants |
| 6 | the gas service in the building and |
| 7 | during the winter period would have the |
| 8 | service available to them to keep the |
| 9 | building warm to keep the pipes from |
| 10 | freezing. So we don't proactively go out |
| 11 | and shut off every building that may not |
| 12 | have usage for a long period of time. |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Your |
| 14 | employees are highly trained. Your field |
| 15 | employees are highly trained individuals |
| 16 | who work with dangerous substance like |
| 17 | gas all the time. |
| 18 | MR. MOSER: Yes, sir. |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you see |
| 20 | a role for your street personnel to |
| 21 | communicate or to make a note or to |
| 22 | report anything like that relative to a |
| 23 | large building that may either be |
| 24 | certainly has gas service but may be |
| 25 | inhabited by people who shouldn't be in |
| | |

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| 2 | the building or is in a dangerous |
| 3 | condition or they're working on a street, |
| 4 | they're working in a street operation |
| 5 | repairing a main or doing some work and |
| 6 | looking at a building that looks like it |
| 7 | could come down any moment? |
| 8 | I mean, I think part of this |
| 9 | whole problem is kind of the lack of |
| 10 | integration with all the City |
| 11 | departments, that when you see something, |
| 12 | say something. It's that way with |
| 13 | terrorism and it's that way with |
| 14 | buildings that are going to fall on |
| 15 | people. So is there a policy or could |
| 16 | you develop a policy that would allow |
| 17 | your guys, your people to communicate |
| 18 | with L&I, with Fire, with whoever? |
| 19 | MR. MOSER: Well, we do have an |
| 20 | internal policy that our street |
| 21 | individuals, if they see a vacant |
| 22 | building or a demolition that we were not |
| 23 | previously informed of, to notify our |
| 24 | internal supervision, and they then in |
| 25 | turn get in touch with the L&I |

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| 2 | department. So we do have that as our |
| 3 | current policy. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Does your |
| 5 | IT capability allow you to communicate |
| 6 | directly from handheld or from MDT units |
| 7 | to your internal information? |
| 8 | MR. MOSER: Yes, it does. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And is |
| 10 | there any connection between your |
| 11 | internal information folks other than the |
| 12 | telephone? |
| 13 | MR. MOSER: Not currently there |
| 14 | is not, no. |
| 15 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's |
| 16 | something I think we should be looking |
| 17 | at. I mean, again, one of the reasons |
| 18 | why you guys are like public your |
| 19 | folks are public safety workers, as far |
| 20 | as I'm concerned. |
| 21 | MR. MOSER: Absolutely. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And we've |
| 23 | seen some tragedy in the past, and thank |
| 24 | God it doesn't happen often, but I think |
| 25 | you could be an integral part of that |

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| | |
| 2 | process since boots on the street |
| 3 | create opportunities for communication. |
| 4 | Whether it's you, whether it's the |
| 5 | Parking Authority, whether it's Water |
| 6 | Department workers, we're all in this |
| 7 | together and we should all be |
| 8 | communicating, and we can't have that |
| 9 | "that's not my job" kind of attitude. |
| 10 | MR. MOSER: I would agree with |
| 11 | you. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I |
| 13 | appreciate that. Thank you. |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman |
| 15 | Kenney is speaking about silos. |
| 16 | Real quick, do you interact, |
| 17 | particularly you, Commissioner, with the |
| 18 | Fire Department at all by way of |
| 19 | disruption of service maybe and access to |
| 20 | water by way of an occasion of a fire as |
| 21 | a result of demolition? |
| 22 | COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: We do |
| 23 | work with the Fire Department very |
| 24 | closely obviously in the operation and |
| 25 | maintenance of all the fire hydrants in |
| | |

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| 2 | the City and our permit process where |
| 3 | contractors use those hydrants. We do |
| 4 | want to make sure that there's always |
| 5 | hydrants available to deal with any kind |
| 6 | of emergency, any fire in the City. |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. What |
| 8 | I'd like to do is ask you guys to stay. |
| 9 | Councilman Henon did have some questions |
| 10 | for you, but he was pulled out for a |
| 11 | call, and we can in the process bring up |
| 12 | the next people to testify. |
| 13 | Will the Clerk please read the |
| 14 | next witnesses to testify. |
| 15 | THE CLERK: Frank Breslin, |
| 16 | Revenue Department; David Perri, Streets |
| 17 | Department. |
| 18 | (Witnesses approached witness |
| 19 | table.) |
| 20 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so |
| 21 | much for your patience. Please have a |
| 22 | seat and state your name for the record. |
| 23 | And I understand you guys have written |
| 24 | testimony, and would you please summarize |
| 25 | it in your comments. |

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| 2 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 3 | Sure. My name is Frank Breslin. I'm |
| 4 | Deputy Revenue Commissioner. I'm here to |
| 5 | testify specifically about Revenue's role |
| 6 | in the demolition process and how we |
| 7 | collaborate with L&I. |
| 8 | As you know, Revenue is charged |
| 9 | with the collection of revenue due to the |
| 10 | City and the School District of |
| 11 | Philadelphia, and in that effort, we |
| 12 | collaborate with other City departments, |
| 13 | including Licenses and Inspections. We |
| 14 | collaborate through joint projects. We |
| 15 | attend regularly scheduled meetings. We |
| 16 | share information, and L&I participates |
| 17 | in our tax clearance program. |
| 18 | The tax clearance program |
| 19 | provides a mechanism so that L&I can |
| 20 | check permit and license applicants to |
| 21 | see if they're tax compliant. The Tax |
| 22 | Clearance Unit the tax clearance |
| 23 | process when it informs them that a tax |
| 24 | payer is non-compliant, they're put in |
| 25 | touch with the Revenue Department. They |
| | |

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| 2 | come to our Tax Clearance Unit or contact |
| 3 | our Tax Clearance Unit by phone, whatever |
| 4 | method of contact, and the Tax Clearance |
| 5 | Unit alerts them to what the reason for |
| 6 | the non-compliance is. L&I doesn't know |
| 7 | that. They just know that the taxpayer |
| 8 | is non-compliant in some way. |
| 9 | So we then inform the taxpayer |
| 10 | of what they need to do to come into |
| 11 | compliance. We try to walk them through |
| 12 | the compliance process. Sometimes there |
| 13 | may be confusion. They need to file |
| 14 | returns. They need to pay. They need to |
| 15 | get into an installment agreement. |
| 16 | Whatever that need is, the Tax Clearance |
| 17 | Unit walks them through that process. |
| 18 | When the taxpayer becomes |
| 19 | compliant, the Tax Clearance Unit would |
| 20 | issue a tax clearance certificate, and |
| 21 | the applicant can then submit that tax |
| 22 | clearance certificate to L&I as proof |
| 23 | that they've come into compliance and |
| 24 | they're eligible for the application or |
| | |

permit.

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Excuse me. |
| 3 | Does that apply to the building owner, |
| 4 | the contractor and their respective |
| 5 | subcontractors? |
| 6 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 7 | Whoever the party is applying for the |
| 8 | permit or the applicant. Revenue may not |
| 9 | know the exact connection. We just know |
| 10 | that they've come over with a compliance |
| 11 | issue, and they would tell us their |
| 12 | entity, who they are, and then we tell |
| 13 | them the details of their non-compliance. |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So if an |
| 15 | engineer that may not be the owner of the |
| 16 | building comes in and they clear, they're |
| 17 | able to get the permit? |
| 18 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 19 | We would give that engineer a tax |
| 20 | clearance certificate. We don't approve |
| 21 | anybody for anything. We give them a |
| 22 | certificate that says they've come into |
| 23 | tax compliance, and then they would bring |
| 24 | that back to L&I, and L&I would use that |
| 25 | to approve or deny to approve the |

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| 2 | permit or application. |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So if I'm |
| 4 | the owner of the building and I'm in |
| 5 | non-compliance, under the current system |
| 6 | you would not be able to pick that up? |
| 7 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 8 | No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying |
| 9 | whoever the applicant is. So I think it |
| 10 | depends on what permit or application |
| 11 | you're applying for. So if as the owner |
| 12 | of a building you need to apply for a |
| 13 | particular permit and you're not in |
| 14 | compliance, you would be directed to us |
| 15 | and we would check your account for |
| 16 | non-compliance. If you're a contractor |
| 17 | and you're applying for a license that is |
| 18 | specific to the contractor, then we're |
| 19 | checking the tax compliance of the |
| 20 | contractor. |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So, again, |
| 22 | if I'm the demolition company and then I |
| 23 | hand it off to a non-compliant company, |
| 24 | there is no mechanism by which you can |
| 25 | check that at this point? |

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| 2 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 3 | That I'm not sure. I don't know all of |
| 4 | the processes of applications and permits |
| 5 | through L&I. So if they don't need to |
| 6 | apply for anything subsequent, then we |
| 7 | wouldn't know. |
| 8 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: See, I'm |
| 9 | going to use your line. If L&I were |
| 10 | here, we could ask them, not anything to |
| 11 | do with 22nd and Market, but everything |
| 12 | to do with what we're talking about now, |
| 13 | is that when I have a third-party |
| 14 | expediter, when I have an architect or an |
| 15 | engineer or a person that's the agent for |
| 16 | the building or the owner, they get the |
| 17 | permit, they're tax compliant, and they |
| 18 | turn it over to the Three Stooges |
| 19 | Demolition Company, who are not tax |
| 20 | compliant. |
| 21 | L&I should have a mechanism |
| 22 | this is not Revenue's fault, but L&I |
| 23 | should have a mechanism and supposedly |
| 24 | it's going to be in place soon. I mean, |
| 25 | I don't know what "soon" means, but |

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| 2 | soon where they have to self-report |
| 3 | who is on the job site via the computer, |
| 4 | so that you can then, L&I and/or Revenue, |
| 5 | could then check and see whether XYZ |
| 6 | company that's now self-reported is in |
| 7 | fact tax compliant, which would allow L&I |
| 8 | to take certain measures, you guys to |
| 9 | take certain measures to make sure |
| 10 | they're tax compliant. But without that |
| 11 | self-reporting and without those eyes, I |
| 12 | don't know who is and as we've seen in |
| 13 | bad situations, I don't know who is on |
| 14 | that job site. All I know is that a tax |
| 15 | compliant person pulled the permit from |
| 16 | L&I. |
| 17 | The other issue that |
| 18 | exacerbates that and this is something |
| 19 | maybe you can respond to is that the |
| 20 | Three Stooges Construction Company hires |
| 21 | people off the street who don't |
| 22 | necessarily are not necessarily on |
| 23 | their payroll. So that construction |
| 24 | company, that general contractor, has no |
| 25 | certified payroll. So I have 25 |

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| 2 | individuals on a construction or |
| 3 | demolition site who are being paid in I |
| 4 | don't know what manner, probably cash, |
| 5 | and are not paying wage taxes, are not |
| 6 | paying any state taxes or any of the |
| 7 | other requirements that an employer has |
| 8 | to go through like workmen's comp and |
| 9 | unemployment comp. How can Revenue get |
| 10 | our arms around that underground economy |
| 11 | that is not only ripping us off and |
| 12 | ripping off the legitimate contractor, |
| 13 | but is generally if you're not if |
| 14 | you're doing all those corner cuts, |
| 15 | you're probably not doing a good job on |
| 16 | the site either. So that's a safety |
| 17 | issue. |
| 18 | So how does Revenue address all |
| 19 | that? |
| 20 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 21 | Well, part of our collaboration with L&I |
| 22 | is, we do have regularly scheduled |
| 23 | meetings. We meet with them quarterly. |
| 24 | But with their implementation of the |
| 25 | Construction Site Task Force, which I |

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| 2 | think is a part coming out of Council |
| 3 | Bill 120776 so from the time that bill |
| 4 | was passed, we've met with L&I. We're |
| 5 | going to meet with them monthly. We've |
| 6 | set up some processes, some |
| 7 | interdepartmental processes, for |
| 8 | communication, and we're going to meet |
| 9 | monthly to see that they're working. |
| 10 | So broadly how we view this is, |
| 11 | L&I will be out there on the construction |
| 12 | sites and they'll be bringing back the |
| 13 | information, who is registered, who is |
| 14 | not registered. The not registered |
| 15 | contractors need to come to Revenue. And |
| 16 | that is our role, to find out if they're |
| 17 | not registered, we need to contact them |
| 18 | and either audit them or contact them to |
| 19 | bring them into compliance. |
| 20 | In the case of no payrolls |
| 21 | where sometimes there's questions of I'm |
| 22 | not an unregistered contractor because |
| 23 | we're just using the truck of the company |
| 24 | but we're really employees, we're going |
| 25 | to address that situation where L&I gets |
| | |

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| 2 | that report, then they'll also |
| 3 | communicate that information to Revenue, |
| 4 | who will then do essentially an expedited |
| 5 | audit where we get the payroll records |
| 6 | that include that period of time. So |
| 7 | we'll be able to go in and see do those |
| 8 | actual individuals exist, is there a |
| 9 | payroll. If there's no payroll, |
| 10 | obviously that's not that wasn't |
| 11 | correct and the contractor is liable. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: In your |
| 13 | discussions with L&I, two things that I'm |
| 14 | trying to get answers from from L&I |
| 15 | and maybe since you've talked to them and |
| 16 | they talk to you, you can tell us. Is |
| 17 | there some type of plan for |
| 18 | self-reporting by a website for who's on |
| 19 | the job site? Because that's something |
| 20 | when Fran Burns was commissioner, we had |
| 21 | a hearing and we talked about they were |
| 22 | developing an IT, a software program that |
| 23 | would allow general contractors and/or |
| 24 | subs within 72 hours of getting on the |
| 25 | site to be able to log on and say they're |

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| 2 | there, what their tax number is and all |
| 3 | the other pertinent information. Is |
| 4 | there anything going in that direction? |
| 5 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: I |
| 6 | don't know the specifics of that. They |
| 7 | have discussed a lot of enhancements that |
| 8 | will be included in Project Eclipse, but |
| 9 | I don't know the specifics. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have they |
| 11 | discussed the possibility or the |
| 12 | requirement to shut a job down when it's |
| 13 | clearly a mass of fraud, where no one is |
| 14 | on there's no payroll, it's basically |
| 15 | hiring guys as day laborers and paying |
| 16 | them every week in cash? Is there any |
| 17 | discussion of stopping that job as |
| 18 | opposed to letting it go on and on and on |
| 19 | while you guys chase your tail trying to |
| 20 | get them to come into compliance while |
| 21 | they're thumbing their nose at everybody |
| 22 | else but the job is getting finished? |
| 23 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 24 | Yes. |
| 25 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Has there |

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| 2 | been any discussion of job stoppage? |
| 3 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 4 | They have discussed job stoppage in |
| 5 | general terms. We haven't gotten into |
| 6 | the specifics of how that will happen. |
| 7 | On our side, one of the things that the |
| 8 | Revenue Department is now doing on tax |
| 9 | delinquents it's a little bit of a |
| 10 | different situation, but it's similar |
| 11 | is, we're starting to do CAL (ph) |
| 12 | revocation. So we are revoking licenses, |
| 13 | which gives them so there could be |
| 14 | communication there, which would give |
| 15 | them the authority to close the job site. |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And are you |
| 17 | having any discussion with them about the |
| 18 | requirement that a developer/owner who |
| 19 | employs those tactics to put money in |
| 20 | their own pocket as opposed to in their |
| 21 | employees' pockets or into the City tax |
| 22 | rolls, that they ultimately be |
| 23 | responsible for the calculated loss of |
| 24 | taxes to the City and state, that it |
| 25 | would be ultimately when we catch you and |

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| 2 | we calculate the amount of personnel | |
| 3 | hours and what you beat us on average | |
| 4 | salary, what you beat us in taxes, | |
| 5 | Mr. New York developer, or whoever you | |
| 6 | are, here's the tax bill, it's on you | |
| 7 | now. Now we're going to lien you for the | |
| 8 | stuff you beat us on. Is there any | |
| 9 | discussion of that? | |
| 10 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: | |
| 11 | There has not been. | |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. | |
| 13 | Thank you. | |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, | |
| 15 | Councilman. | |
| 16 | Councilman Kenney I mean | |
| 17 | we need a break. Councilman Henon. | |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you, | |
| 19 | Mr. Chairman. | |
| 20 | Good afternoon now, a little | |
| 21 | after noontime. So on the line of | |
| 22 | questioning regarding people performing | |
| 23 | work and audits and the, I guess, | |
| 24 | timeline in which a job site can be | |
| 25 | audited and discovered whether somebody | |
| | | |

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| 2 | is incompliant whatsoever, so the focus |
| 3 | now I just wanted to clarify this. |
| 4 | The focus now is on delinquencies. Is |
| 5 | that what I heard you say? |
| 6 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 7 | The focus is on delinquencies and |
| 8 | registration. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And |
| 10 | registration. |
| 11 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 12 | Meaning businesses. Some businesses may |
| 13 | owe back taxes. There's a possibility |
| 14 | that there's businesses there's |
| 15 | contractors out there that don't owe us |
| 16 | any back taxes because they never went |
| 17 | through the steps to get a license or |
| 18 | file any tax returns and they're just |
| 19 | basically flying under the radar. So |
| 20 | we're looking for unregistered taxpayers |
| 21 | as well. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Right. |
| 23 | Which is a huge underground market here |
| 24 | in the City of Philadelphia, as some of |
| 25 | the conversations that we've had. A bill |

| | | ⊥∠. |
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| 2 | has passed here, this Council and this | |
| 3 | body, 17 to 0 to try to deal with | |
| 4 | unlicensed contractors and workers who | |
| 5 | don't have a license or who don't work | |
| 6 | for a licensed contractor. | |
| 7 | With that being said, does the | |
| 8 | Department in the Department's eyes, | |
| 9 | would you agree that there are only two | |
| 10 | types of workers on the job site? It | |
| 11 | would be a licensed contractor or an | |
| 12 | employee of a licensed contractor. Would | |
| 13 | the Department elevate that they're the | |
| 14 | only two types of workers on a job site? | |
| 15 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: | |
| 16 | Yeah, I would agree generally. We would | |
| 17 | classify them as a contractor or | |
| 18 | subcontractor. | |
| 19 | COUNCILMAN HENON: A licensed | |
| 20 | contractor, right? | |
| 21 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: | |
| 22 | And an employee, yes. Yes. | |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Or an | |
| 24 | employee of a licensed contractor. | |
| 25 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: | |
| | | |

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| 2 | They're the only legitimate people that |
| 3 | should be on the job site, yes. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Great. Now, |
| 5 | so somebody has a complaint, somebody |
| 6 | calls 3-1-1. 3-1-1 don't get back to you |
| 7 | for 50 days and the job comes and goes. |
| 8 | How quick would a complaint to Revenue |
| 9 | turn around to see if somebody is |
| 10 | incompliant, whether they are a licensed |
| 11 | contractor or an employee of a licensed |
| 12 | contractor or if the contractor is |
| 13 | incompliant with its current or current |
| 14 | on its taxes? |
| 15 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 16 | It would be fairly quickly, and I know |
| 17 | that's general. In some cases we would |
| 18 | dispatch an investigator to the job site |
| 19 | to verify the activity. That's not |
| 20 | always possible to do that real quickly, |
| 21 | because our investigators could already |
| 22 | be out on the street for the day doing |
| 23 | another initiative, but we try to get |
| 24 | somebody out to the job site within days. |
| 25 | Sometimes that person is no longer there. |

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| 2 | But if we have the information, if the |
| 3 | complaint includes who the contractor |
| 4 | was, the day they were there, the job |
| 5 | site and we have enough information, then |
| б | we'll go into our own records to check |
| 7 | our internal records to see if that |
| 8 | contractor is registered. If we |
| 9 | determine that contractor is not |
| 10 | registered, then we will send them a |
| 11 | notice indicating that we have reason to |
| 12 | believe that they are operating in the |
| 13 | City of Philadelphia and that we want |
| 14 | their tax information, and that will |
| 15 | happen within weeks of a complaint. And |
| 16 | then if they don't respond, we'll take |
| 17 | additional enforcement action. |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN HENON: And I think |
| 19 | Councilman Kenney hit it right on the |
| 20 | head when he stated that what happens to |
| 21 | the job that's currently under |
| 22 | construction right now, whether it's |
| 23 | demolition or construction. You have |
| 24 | somebody who is not tax compliant and |
| 25 | we're sending out notices and going back |

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| 2 | and forth. The next thing you know a |
| 3 | month and a half or two months are passed |
| 4 | by, and whatever due process is and |
| 5 | however antiquated our system is at this |
| 6 | time, we need to change that. |
| 7 | Does the Revenue Department in |
| 8 | their coordination with L&I, are they |
| 9 | ever proactive in let me back up. Do |
| 10 | you take a look at the status of |
| 11 | somebody's a contractor's compliant |
| 12 | from their permits? That would be a good |
| 13 | start, taking a look at whoever pulls |
| 14 | permits to see if they're incompliant. |
| 15 | How does that work? Does L&I do you |
| 16 | have access through any kind of |
| 17 | communication |
| 18 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 19 | We don't do any checks. I mean, we |
| 20 | generally communicate with L&I. A lot of |
| 21 | times on these job site investigations, |
| 22 | it will be joint. I mean, we'll go out, |
| 23 | but L&I we share the information. L&I |
| 24 | goes out, and we're really out there with |
| 25 | different purposes. We're out there from |

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| 2 | a revenue standpoint, not from a health |
| 3 | or safety standpoint. We want to get out |
| 4 | there. We want to find out the |
| 5 | information that we each need to gather |
| 6 | is different and for a different purpose. |
| 7 | So we go out to gather our information. |
| 8 | We want to find out who the contractor |
| 9 | is, try to get a federal ID number. If |
| 10 | they have employees on the site, we want |
| 11 | to take a head count, to the degree |
| 12 | possible, to see how many employees are |
| 13 | on the site so we have an idea when we |
| 14 | come back and look at our internal |
| 15 | records, they have a wage tax account, |
| 16 | but do they have the right number of |
| 17 | employees, are they paying the proper |
| 18 | amount of tax. And we take it down that |
| 19 | road, and we're ultimately looking to get |
| 20 | them compliant, meaning that they're |
| 21 | paying the right amount of tax. And |
| 22 | that's different from whether they have |
| 23 | the correct permits or licenses. We're |
| 24 | not really looking at that. But we do |
| 25 | share information. If we find somebody |
| | |

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 1
 2
         that's non-compliant and L&I is not
 3
         available, we will alert L&I, and they
         will do the same with us.
 4
 5
                   COUNCILMAN JONES:
                                       Councilman,
 6
         if I may.
                   One of the reasons why we are
         talking about interdepartmental
 9
         cooperation, it's implied in the heading,
10
         cooperation, and that there needs to be a
11
         central entity that codifies all this
12
         information, because your red flag of
13
         non-compliance of contractors indicates
14
         something to another department that may
15
         be critical in saving lives. If somebody
         passes off through a third party a
16
         certificate and that individual is not
17
18
         reputable, if that individual is not in
19
         compliance, that indicates that there may
20
         be other problems we need to be drawn to.
21
                   So for you working with L&I,
22
         working with the Water Department,
         working with the Gas Works, working with
23
24
         the Fire Department, working all
25
         together, that's what keeps us safe.
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| 2 | It's when we miss a cue, miss a red flag |
| 3 | that bad things happen. So that's why |
| 4 | that coordination aspect of it. We know |
| 5 | you're going to do your job, but we want |
| 6 | it to be in almost synergistic with the |
| 7 | other departments to create a total |
| 8 | safety picture for us, and that's what |
| 9 | we're challenging you kind of to think |
| 10 | beyond just your role. |
| 11 | I'm sorry, Councilman. Go |
| 12 | ahead. |
| 13 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 14 | And one of the things and maybe it |
| 15 | wasn't thought in that context, but one |
| 16 | of the things that the Department is |
| 17 | looking at developing in the near term is |
| 18 | acquiring a data warehouse. And part of |
| 19 | that can be to give other departments |
| 20 | access to our data. Now, some of our |
| 21 | data is confidential and we can't |
| 22 | disclose that, but compliant, |
| 23 | non-compliant, just that term, we can |
| 24 | make that available, and the data |
| 25 | warehouse would be a great place for |

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| 2 | other departments to be able to link to |
| 3 | to look for our information. And |
| | |
| 4 | departments that deem that to be |
| 5 | important information to them would be |
| 6 | able to get access, and it would be |
| 7 | automated access. It wouldn't have to be |
| 8 | a person talking to another person where, |
| 9 | you know, you get breakdowns because a |
| 10 | person is on vacation or whatever. This |
| 11 | could be systematic, programmatic. |
| 12 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Exactly. |
| 13 | I'm sorry, Councilman. |
| 14 | COUNCILMAN HENON: As the |
| 15 | Chairman had just stated, we have an |
| 16 | opportunity here to create a framework |
| 17 | that makes the interdepartmental |
| 18 | collaboration work with one process, |
| 19 | where it can, upon inspections, upon |
| 20 | somebody pulling a permit, that the City |
| 21 | is talking to each other, and at the end |
| 22 | result, one of the core I mean, a core |
| 23 | service that we provide is keeping the |
| 24 | public safe, and whether it's our first |
| 25 | responders, whether it's the Streets |
| | |

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| 2 | Department, whether it's L&I, and Revenue |
| 3 | plays a vital role. I mean, it's vital |
| 4 | in being a part of the process. |
| 5 | So is there anybody in the |
| 6 | Department of Revenue assigned to L&I? |
| 7 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 8 | Currently there's not a particular person |
| 9 | assigned to L&I. There's not. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN HENON: Some of the |
| 11 | conversations that, off-of-the-line |
| 12 | conversations, have been as a result of |
| 13 | as we move forward implementing some |
| 14 | legislation or how we enforce some of the |
| 15 | legislation that has multiple departments |
| 16 | such as Revenue and L&I and others talk |
| 17 | to each other more, how can we share |
| 18 | information so the legislation is |
| 19 | enforced. One of the things that we've |
| 20 | been talking about is a complaint board, |
| 21 | having an open cooperating with L&I |
| 22 | and Revenue, having a board where people |
| 23 | could come in and have an open process to |
| 24 | the public that's posted as well on the |
| 25 | website where here are the complaints and |

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| 2 | this is a Revenue issue, because right |
| 3 | now Revenue does you do a fine job |
| 4 | doing what your auditors do and things |
| 5 | like that, but that's between you, the |
| 6 | Department, and whoever you're trying to |
| 7 | communicate with via mail. In these |
| 8 | cases with demolition and construction, |
| 9 | via mail is too long. It just takes too |
| 10 | long, and you can have a major tragedy or |
| 11 | catastrophe that was unintended just |
| 12 | because of the length of time. |
| 13 | So we're trying to put a |
| 14 | framework together which speeds up the |
| 15 | accountability. And one of the other |
| 16 | problems that I've experienced so far is |
| 17 | bad service. If somebody is cheating on |
| 18 | their taxes, I guarantee you they're |
| 19 | cheating on other things, and not sure if |
| 20 | the correct information that they report |
| 21 | is true. So you may be serving an empty |
| 22 | building. I guarantee that happens a lot |
| 23 | in the City of Philadelphia. |
| 24 | So it all does kind of speak to |
| 25 | working together to provide the best |
| | |

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| 2 | service that we can provide to the |
| 3 | citizens of Philadelphia. |
| 4 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 5 | Agreed. |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman, |
| 7 | thank you. |
| 8 | Councilman Kenney. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Let me give |
| 10 | you an example. |
| 11 | Excuse me. I'm suffering with |
| 12 | allergies today bad, so I apologize. |
| 13 | I'll give you a good example of |
| 14 | where your interface with L&I could give |
| 15 | you a roadmap to find folks that are |
| 16 | doing this stuff we want to stop. |
| 17 | There's a licensed electrical contractor |
| 18 | in Bucks County who pulled, I think, 270 |
| 19 | permits last year. The only employee in |
| 20 | his firm is him, and he's in his 80's. |
| 21 | He's either a very good electrician and |
| 22 | he gets that work done really quick, 270 |
| 23 | jobs a year, with no employees but him. |
| 24 | That to me is, Dude, who are you giving |
| 25 | this stuff to? Now I can go out. At |

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| 2 | least I'll know the job sites. At least |
| 3 | I'll know when the New York company that |
| 4 | isn't licensed that's putting their |
| 5 | employees up in a motel in Cherry Hill is |
| 6 | doing a two-week job in Municipal Court, |
| 7 | which is an actual case, that you guys go |
| 8 | over there and start counting heads, and |
| 9 | then somebody knows and then that guy |
| 10 | who is pulling those permits winds up |
| 11 | getting debarred or whatever process we |
| 12 | use that he doesn't pull anymore again. |
| 13 | I mean, that's the kind of, I |
| 14 | think, detective work or work that I |
| 15 | think if you had access or asked for |
| 16 | access to L&I's files, you'd see a |
| 17 | pattern of things. This doesn't make any |
| 18 | sense. How can you do all this work with |
| 19 | no employees? So now you know let's try |
| 20 | him out. And that's, I think, what I'm |
| 21 | talking about when it comes to you using |
| 22 | their tools to help you do your job |
| 23 | better. |
| 24 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 25 | Yeah. |
| | |

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The other |
| 3 | thing is, how many times can you get a |
| 4 | payment agreement? |
| 5 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 6 | How many times can you get a payment |
| 7 | agreement? |
| 8 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Same firm, |
| 9 | I get a payment, I'm in compliance. I |
| 10 | get a permit, I'm out of compliance. I |
| 11 | get a payment agreement, I'm in |
| 12 | compliance. I don't pay my taxes, I'm |
| 13 | out of compliance. How many times can |
| 14 | that dance go on? |
| 15 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 16 | Generally and the process is, a person |
| 17 | comes in for a payment agreement first |
| 18 | time, the terms are more generous and |
| 19 | they're understood that if you're back, |
| 20 | this is not going to be this good again. |
| 21 | By the second time, which happens, they |
| 22 | come in, they essentially get the talk |
| 23 | again, with not as generous terms, much |
| 24 | stricter terms, more of a down payment. |
| 25 | By the third time, we're starting to |

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| 2 | if they're there a third time, we're |
| 3 | starting to take a hard line and look at |
| 4 | a very large down payment, 50 percent or |
| 5 | more in some cases, or no payment |
| 6 | agreement at all. And now with CAL |
| 7 | revocation, we have more bite to go with |
| 8 | that bar, because we could say not only |
| 9 | are you not eligible for a payment |
| 10 | agreement, but if you don't come into |
| 11 | compliance, we're going to close your |
| 12 | business. |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What is our |
| 14 | process in determining multiple names, |
| 15 | same actor multiple names of companies? |
| 16 | So, for example, you've gotten to the end |
| 17 | of your rope with this person on ABC |
| 18 | Construction Company and they open up XYZ |
| 19 | Construction Company. Do we have a way |
| 20 | of tracking the principals or the people |
| 21 | who are opening these accounts to |
| 22 | determine whether or not they've opened |
| 23 | five or six others over the last four, |
| 24 | five years? |
| 25 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| | |

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| 2 | To some degree. I mean, but that is a |
| 3 | game that can be played, opening separate |
| 4 | legal entities. And we look to see |
| 5 | through our system if it's the same |
| 6 | principal, same activity, no periods of |
| 7 | discontinuation, and we take that into |
| 8 | consideration. |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do we have |
| 10 | the capacity to confiscate assets? Like, |
| 11 | for example, if it's a construction |
| 12 | company and they have three trucks and |
| 13 | they owe us a hundred grand in wage and |
| 14 | business taxes, can we take the trucks? |
| 15 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 16 | That would be a question for Law. I'm |
| 17 | not sure. Currently we don't do that. |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But if you |
| 19 | had the power to do that, that would, I |
| 20 | guess, enhance your ability to collect. |
| 21 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 22 | Sure. |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Also in |
| 24 | suburban areas, for example, if I'm a |
| 25 | roofer and I'm from Philadelphia and I |
| | |

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| 2 | don't have a license in such-and-such a |
| 3 | township and I go out and put a ladder up |
| 4 | against a house and start doing a roof |
| 5 | and they come and check and I don't have |
| 6 | a license, they'll take my stuff. |
| 7 | They'll take my kettle, they'll take my |
| 8 | truck. Now, that seems to be extreme, |
| 9 | but it works out there, and I'd like to |
| 10 | see it work here. |
| 11 | Just one word of praise. I |
| 12 | understand your commissioner is like a |
| 13 | dog with a bone, and I'm getting calls |
| 14 | from people who are like, What are they |
| 15 | calling me now after so many years? |
| 16 | I said, Can't help you. You're |
| 17 | going to but I understand that the |
| 18 | activity has ratcheted up in a tremendous |
| 19 | level, and I would like you to carry that |
| 20 | back to her and to your folks that I'm |
| 21 | really happy with them. I'm really happy |
| 22 | I'm getting complaints about people |
| 23 | collecting taxes. |
| 24 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: |
| 25 | Good. Thank you. |

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's a | |
| 3 | good complaint to get. | |
| 4 | DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: | |
| 5 | It is. | |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there | |
| 7 | any other questions for this panel? | |
| 8 | (No response.) | |
| 9 | COUNCILMAN JONES: For this | |
| 10 | group? Are there any others to testify? | |
| 11 | Mr. Perri, you didn't testify. | |
| 12 | You didn't say anything, come on. You | |
| 13 | thought you were going to get away. | |
| 14 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: I thought | |
| 15 | I was getting off scot-free. | |
| 16 | Good afternoon, Chairman | |
| 17 | Jones | |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN JONES: You weren't | |
| 19 | going to tell us either. | |
| 20 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: and | |
| 21 | members of the Special Investigating | |
| 22 | Committee. My name is David Perri and I | |
| 23 | am the Acting Streets Commissioner. I | |
| 24 | have submitted formal testimony. If you | |
| 25 | would like, I can read that into the | |
| | | |

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| 2 | record or I can offer a brief summary. |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Please |
| 4 | summarize. |
| 5 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Okay. |
| 6 | Title 11 of The Philadelphia Code |
| 7 | provides the Department of Streets with |
| 8 | the authority to issue sidewalk and |
| 9 | street closure permits. The reason why |
| 10 | we issue these permits are essentially |
| 11 | threefold: for traffic control and |
| 12 | safety, for scheduling and notification, |
| 13 | and for avoiding conflicts with utilities |
| 14 | and other construction work. |
| 15 | Currently, we require the |
| 16 | submittal of a completed building permit |
| 17 | from the Department of Licenses and |
| 18 | Inspections as a prerequisite before we |
| 19 | will issue any sidewalk or street closure |
| 20 | permit. We are actively working with the |
| 21 | Department of Licenses and Inspections to |
| 22 | incorporate the new site safety plan |
| 23 | submission and design professional |
| 24 | recommendations into the process. We're |
| 25 | also talking to L&I about sharing |

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| 2 | databases and perhaps working off of a |
| 3 | single permit database. |
| 4 | I'm available to answer any |
| 5 | questions. |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so |
| 7 | very much. Now, what has happened post |
| 8 | Market Street that has changed within |
| 9 | your process within demolition, your |
| 10 | department? |
| 11 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Well, we |
| 12 | reviewed all our current processes for |
| 13 | issuing permits, and we feel that we need |
| 14 | to integrate the site safety plan and |
| 15 | design professionals recommendations into |
| 16 | our process prior to our issuance of the |
| 17 | sidewalk or street closure permit. The |
| 18 | way it is now, we're asking for the L&I |
| 19 | permit first. Our thinking was that we |
| 20 | did not want to put a piece of paper out |
| 21 | on the street without making sure that |
| 22 | there was an associated building permit, |
| 23 | because sometimes someone could show that |
| 24 | piece of paper and say, I got a sidewalk |
| 25 | closure, it says it's for demolition, |

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| 2 | therefore I'm allowed to demolish the |
| 3 | building. Well, that could be a complete |
| 4 | fallacy. |
| 5 | L&I, on the other hand, they |
| 6 | need to make sure that the street closure |
| 7 | permits are out on the street also, |
| 8 | because they are overall responsible for |
| 9 | the safety of the construction project. |
| 10 | So what we're talking about is taking |
| 11 | that site safety plan, having it reviewed |
| 12 | by the Department of Licenses and |
| 13 | Inspections, have it signed off by their |
| 14 | plan examiner. That would then come to |
| 15 | the Streets Department. We would issue |
| 16 | our street closure permit. L&I in turn |
| 17 | would take that street closure permit and |
| 18 | issue the building permit. So the end of |
| 19 | the day is, both permits get issued |
| 20 | concurrently and the two departments are |
| 21 | on the same page. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN JONES: In reference |
| 23 | to street closings, to what degree does |
| 24 | traffic patterns, time of day come into |
| 25 | play by way of do they ask for the |

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| 2 | street closure or do you on occasion |
| 3 | insist upon a street closure, and how |
| 4 | does that work? |
| 5 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: The |
| 6 | contractor will come to us. We will ask |
| 7 | them what type of activity that they're |
| 8 | proposing. They request the closures |
| 9 | from us. We will then look at what other |
| 10 | construction activity is in the area. We |
| 11 | will look at the extent of the closure |
| 12 | that they want. We will look at the |
| 13 | impact on traffic patterns and then make |
| 14 | a determination as to whether or not they |
| 15 | can have that closure, whether or not we |
| 16 | need to have the Police Department |
| 17 | involved in pulling traffic past the |
| 18 | construction site. We will notify Police |
| 19 | and Fire that there's a detour or an |
| 20 | issue with traffic in a particular area. |
| 21 | That's our emphasis. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So the case |
| 23 | of Broad Street and the Armory, for |
| 24 | example, in this case study, how would |
| 25 | you approach that project? |
| | |

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| 2 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Well, I |
| 3 | don't know the details of that |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN JONES: On Broad |
| 5 | Street. |
| 6 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: I would |
| 7 | assume that they would need to have |
| 8 | sidewalk and a parking lane closure to do |
| 9 | that project. |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: So not only |
| 11 | the sidewalk but where the cars would |
| 12 | park adjacent to the sidewalk? |
| 13 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Right. In |
| 14 | listening to the testimony, it seems like |
| 15 | the preferred method would be to bring in |
| 16 | at some point cranes, and they're going |
| 17 | to need to park in the parking lane, |
| 18 | reach over the sidewalk. So without |
| 19 | knowing the details, I would think that |
| 20 | what would be appropriate for that |
| 21 | particular operation would be a parking |
| 22 | lane and sidewalk closure. |
| 23 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And, again, |
| 24 | could you define how you work with L&I? |
| 25 | Do you work with any other departments? |
| | |

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| 2 | Water? |
| 3 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Yeah. I |
| 4 | mean, we're in constant communication |
| 5 | with all the departments. L&I has been |
| 6 | very good at giving us referrals on |
| 7 | projects in which there's a building |
| 8 | permit out there but the contractor |
| 9 | didn't come back for the sidewalk or |
| 10 | street closure permit. There's a good |
| 11 | relationship there. We're constantly |
| 12 | meeting with the Water Department on |
| 13 | common issues, because obviously they |
| 14 | have their facilities in the public |
| 15 | right-of-way. I think there's pretty |
| 16 | good communication between the three |
| 17 | departments. |
| 18 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Do you send |
| 19 | an inspector out to take a look at what |
| 20 | streets need to be closed? |
| 21 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Our |
| 22 | inspectors will periodically go out and |
| 23 | look at the closures, make sure that the |
| 24 | contractor is not parking vehicles within |
| 25 | the closure, make sure there's still an |

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| active construction site. I mean, we try |
| to make sure that the sidewalk and |
| streets aren't closed for any longer than |
| they need to be. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: And how long |
| does it take to process a permit and how |
| much does it cost? |
| COMMISSIONER PERRI: There's an |
| entire fee schedule for permitting. I'll |
| be happy to send that to you. If you're |
| doing, for instance, a sidewalk platform, |
| we do not charge a fee from the Streets |
| Department to do that. We charge a |
| fairly significant fee if you're closing |
| the entire sidewalk off. The fees are |
| based on the length of the block that |
| you're closing and the timeframe that |
| you're closing it. |
| COUNCILMAN JONES: At what |
| point do you require scaffolding sheds on |
| the sidewalks? Do you require it? |
| COMMISSIONER PERRI: Yeah. |
| What we do is, we offer the contractors |
| several different options. Either they |
| |

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| 2 | put a sidewalk shelter platform up, they |
| 3 | do a partial closure, or if they want a |
| 4 | complete closure, they need to justify |
| 5 | why they need a complete closure. |
| 6 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Did you |
| 7 | answer the part about the length of time |
| 8 | to process a permit? |
| 9 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: In |
| 10 | general, for something simple, we require |
| 11 | two weeks notice to process the request, |
| 12 | but if it's something very complicated, |
| 13 | that could go a lot longer. But for |
| 14 | something that's relatively simple, about |
| 15 | two weeks to turn it around. |
| 16 | COUNCILMAN JONES: And does |
| 17 | that permit have an expiration date? So |
| 18 | if I apply and I'm granted it in January |
| 19 | and my construction actually doesn't take |
| 20 | off until June, would that matter at all? |
| 21 | I guess what's the shelf life of a |
| 22 | permit? |
| 23 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Our |
| 24 | permits are valid for one year, but they |
| 25 | could be renewed upon a showing of need |

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| 2 | for additional time. |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Is there a |
| 4 | difference between imminently dangerous |
| 5 | buildings? |
| 6 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: If there's |
| 7 | a need to shut a sidewalk down, we're |
| 8 | going to authorize the sidewalk to be |
| 9 | shut down. I mean, at some point you |
| 10 | don't wait for paperwork. Public safety |
| 11 | comes first. So if there's a need to |
| 12 | shut it down, you shut it down. |
| 13 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Now, see, |
| 14 | that's music to my ears, public safety |
| 15 | comes first. |
| 16 | Councilman Kenney. |
| 17 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, |
| 18 | Mr. Chairman. |
| 19 | First, I want to compliment the |
| 20 | Streets Department on their last few |
| 21 | years of requirements of sidewalk sheds. |
| 22 | I mean, it is a much more walkable city |
| 23 | today than it was a number of years ago. |
| 24 | Your diligence with keeping people from |
| 25 | parking in the running lanes and parking |

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| 2 | lanes for their own convenience has been |
| 3 | really very well done. I appreciate and |
| 4 | compliment the Department on that. And |
| 5 | it would seem to me like this recurring |
| 6 | theme of reliable, reputable contractors |
| 7 | will follow all of your rules. Everyone |
| 8 | that we've had here today have certain |
| 9 | contact with a reputable GC. They'll |
| 10 | file the permits for street closures or |
| 11 | for sheds. They'll pay their taxes. |
| 12 | They'll do all this other stuff. When it |
| 13 | comes to some of the sidewalk closures |
| 14 | that are frustrating are I call them |
| 15 | the crime scene tape sidewalk closure. |
| 16 | The guy just decides he's going to close |
| 17 | the sidewalk by wrapping poles and making |
| 18 | people walk dangerously into the street. |
| 19 | Do you have folks is that a |
| 20 | complaint-driven problem or do you have |
| 21 | folks out there that are looking for that |
| 22 | stuff? |
| 23 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: It's |
| 24 | primarily complaint-driven that we would |
| 25 | react to those closures. We do not |

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| 2 | currently patrol looking for illegal |
| 3 | sidewalk closures. |
| 4 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And I had |
| 5 | suggested before but it got pushed back |
| 6 | that, for example, the dreaded Parking |
| 7 | Authority that no one seems to like but |
| 8 | seems to be a very efficient ticket |
| 9 | issuer and collector of fines, they're on |
| 10 | the street every day. I mean, those |
| 11 | folks are out there walking the streets |
| 12 | looking for illegally parked cars. Would |
| 13 | you have an issue, would the Department |
| 14 | have an issue with a complaint being |
| 15 | driven by a PEO; for example, in Old City |
| 16 | when they decide they're going to put a |
| 17 | dumpster out there and wrap the tape and |
| 18 | shut the sidewalk, of them sending that |
| 19 | information to you? |
| 20 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: No. We |
| 21 | would have no objection. |
| 22 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Because I |
| 23 | will guarantee that the guy who wraps the |
| 24 | tape around the poles and closes the |
| 25 | sidewalk is the same guy that Mr. Breslin |
| | |

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| 2 | needs to get a hold of because they're |
| 3 | probably not paying their taxes, and it's |
| 4 | probably the same contractor that L&I |
| 5 | needs to look at because they probably |
| 6 | haven't pulled a permit. |
| 7 | So it just all your actions |
| 8 | on the street identify you when the |
| 9 | company has its sign up and its sidewalk |
| 10 | shed and its workers with hard hats and |
| 11 | reflective gear and you know that this is |
| 12 | a company that knows what they're doing. |
| 13 | When you got the guy out there taking |
| 14 | advantage of the poor immigrant that |
| 15 | doesn't have his documents and they're |
| 16 | digging out a basement, they're the ones |
| 17 | that we got to get our arms around. |
| 18 | And so, again, I would like to |
| 19 | bring in other departments, whether |
| 20 | they're City departments or quasi |
| 21 | government departments, to all play a |
| 22 | role in the information-gathering process |
| 23 | so that we can all do our jobs better. |
| 24 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: We would |
| 25 | welcome that. |

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| 2 | COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. |
| 3 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there |
| 4 | any other Councilwoman Blackwell. |
| 5 | COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank |
| 6 | you very much. |
| 7 | Certainly I'd like to thank |
| 8 | Mr. Perri and Carlton Williams, L&I |
| 9 | Commissioner's absence. It is said where |
| 10 | there's no law, there's no transgression. |
| 11 | So it seems that out of this Committee |
| 12 | we're finding out and realizing that the |
| 13 | problem is where the rubber meets the |
| 14 | road and where we don't have |
| 15 | communication between departments and |
| 16 | where things, as Chinua Achebe, they said |
| 17 | things fall apart, where the right hand |
| 18 | doesn't know what the left hand is doing. |
| 19 | But certainly we thank you and |
| 20 | certainly we thank our L&I Commissioner |
| 21 | for following up where we can. No |
| 22 | disrespect to you, Commissioner Breslin. |
| 23 | Just don't know specifically where you |
| 24 | are or what we need to do in terms of |
| 25 | these compliance issues, but certainly |
| | |

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| 2 | for Dave Perri and Carlton Williams, we |
| 3 | worked with them forever and we know that |
| 4 | their intentions are to do a good job. |
| 5 | Thank you. |
| 6 | COMMISSIONER PERRI: Thank you. |
| 7 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there |
| 8 | any other questions? |
| 9 | (No response.) |
| 10 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none, |
| 11 | I want to make a closing statement, which |
| 12 | says the following, that our intentions |
| 13 | are to work with the Administration to |
| 14 | get this right. We, like other big |
| 15 | cities, are experiencing the tail end of |
| 16 | the recession and the beginning, God |
| 17 | willing, of economic opportunity. With |
| 18 | that comes great responsibility, that we |
| 19 | just don't willy-nilly approach this, |
| 20 | that we coordinate together to get this |
| 21 | right, that with new permits for |
| 22 | construction come old permits for |
| 23 | demolition, and if we do this thing |
| 24 | right, it will benefit the City of |
| 25 | Philadelphia. If we don't, the less than |
| | |

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| 2 | reputable firms will take advantage of |
| 3 | our inability to coordinate, our |
| 4 | inability to cooperate, and we just can't |
| 5 | allow that to happen. |
| 6 | As good public servants as you |
| 7 | are, we have to work together with you to |
| 8 | create good public policy and legislation |
| 9 | that protects our citizens. And economic |
| 10 | development is a wonderful driver, but |
| 11 | for us, public safety is the primary |
| 12 | concern. And we want to work with every |
| 13 | department to make sure that the |
| 14 | recommendations that come from this are |
| 15 | helpful to you, but ultimately to protect |
| 16 | the citizens of Philadelphia. And that's |
| 17 | our only concern. |
| 18 | So with that, are there any |
| 19 | other closing comments? |
| 20 | (No response.) |
| 21 | COUNCILMAN JONES: Then this |
| 22 | Committee will stand at recess until |
| 23 | August 1st, 2013, 10:00 a.m. |
| 24 | Thank you all for coming. |
| 25 | (Special Investigating |
| | |

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, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same. MICHELE L. MURPHY RPR-Notary Public (The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)

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