

Committee on Public Health and Human Services
June 26, 2019

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Harrowgate PAL Center
851 E. Tioga Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, June 26, 2019
5:41 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS - CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ - VICE
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTIONS: 180037

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2 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Good
3 afternoon. I'm Councilwoman Maria
4 Quinones-Sanchez. I'm Councilwoman in the 7th
5 Councilmanic District. I want to thank PAL and
6 its leadership for allowing us to come here this
7 afternoon. I am going to apologize for the
8 heat. Didn't know it was going to be the
9 beginning of the heat wave, but I appreciate
10 everyone for coming this afternoon or this early
11 evening.

12 Because of the time sensitivity, as you
13 know, we moved the time from 6:00 to 5:30
14 because we wanted to accommodate our District
15 Attorney Larry Krasner. I have him at the
16 witness table. I'm going to ask the clerk to
17 read the bill, and then turn it over to the
18 Chairwoman of Public Health and Human Services
19 Councilwoman Bass who joins me this evening
20 along with Councilwoman Helen Gym to her right.

21 Clerk, read the title of the resolution.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution 180037:
23 Resolution authorizing the Committee on Public
24 Health and Human Services to hold hearings to
25 assess the City of Philadelphia's efforts, as

1 coordinated by the Managing Director's office
2 and our Human services departments, to prevent
3 and treat abuse, addiction and disease related
4 to the use of opioids.

5 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank
6 you. I want to recognize that many of the
7 different departments are here, the
8 Administration. And we will hear from them
9 after the District Attorney. And then we will
10 go to our community panel. And if you have not
11 signed up to register, you must do so at the
12 front. For time sensitivity, we are asking that
13 people who are testifying be residents of the
14 impacted neighborhood.

15 Want to recognize Councilman Mark
16 Squilla who joins me to my left. And then
17 joining him, Councilman Allan Domb to my left.
18 So with that, I am going to turn it over to my
19 Chairperson. I don't know if Councilman
20 Squilla, you have anything to say real quickly.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: No.

22 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: All
23 right.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good evening,
25 everyone. Thank you so much for being here for

1 this very important meeting. I want to thank
2 everyone for being here. I want to thank my
3 colleagues for being here, as well. I know we
4 all are short on time. I am going to be short
5 on comments, as well.

6 If we can begin and have comments from
7 our District Attorney Mr. Krasner because I know
8 that he is on a very short schedule today, so.
9 Mr. Krasner.

10 MR. KRASNER: Thank you very much.

11 Thank you, Councilmembers, for giving me
12 the opportunity to come here and to address the
13 incredibly important issues of what's happening
14 in Harrowgate. We prepared some data for today.
15 And we have provided that to the members of the
16 public who are here and also to the
17 Councilmembers because we think it's really
18 important not to talk about stories, but to talk
19 about truth and talk about what is really going
20 on. Given the amount of time that we have and
21 the fact that everyone can study these numbers
22 later, there is a couple of very, very important
23 messages that I think come out of this data.
24 And I would like to go over it with you.

25 First of all, this data gives you the

1 opportunity to review to what extent certain
2 crime is actually going up or remaining fairly
3 constant, to what it extent it is much higher,
4 not much higher, whatever that may be. And the
5 data speaks for itself.

6 But the second and most important point
7 is this, for those of you who are under the
8 impression that the District Attorney's Office
9 is not bringing cases when the police make
10 arrests, well, that is nonsense. And whoever
11 has told you that is misleading you. The data
12 is here and it's quite clear. You look at page
13 3 and you look at the arrests that occurred in
14 2018, which are reflected here for specific
15 offenses, and then you look down at the bottom f
16 the page and you look at the cases that are open
17 for those same specific offenses what you are
18 going to see is this.

19 Aggravated assaults firearm arrests, 46;
20 cases open, 43. Aggravated assault no firearm,
21 110 arrests; cases open, 115. Homicide, 5
22 arrests; cases open, 5. Rape arrests, 9; cases
23 open, 9. Robbery by firearm, 31; cases open,
24 37.

25 Now in some of these instances, you are

1 seeing a slightly different number. That is
2 because the number of cases open may reflect the
3 number of victims. If you have an assault of
4 two people, then that may count as two cases
5 even though it was a single arrest, all right.
6 What you are seeing over and over and over is
7 that virtually every single arrest that is
8 submitted to the District Attorney's Office is
9 being charged as a criminal offense.

10 I understand there are some people who
11 don't want to tell that story. That they would
12 prefer to tell a story about how the District
13 Attorney's Office is turning away arrests, but
14 that is not what the data says because that is
15 not true with a couple of exceptions.

16 Number one, we said we would not arrest
17 and prosecute people for possession, I said
18 possession, of marijuana. And we don't. What
19 we are doing is consistent with what the Mayor
20 did years some. What he did some years ago, he
21 created a ticket, a civil ticket for possession
22 of marijuana. But for whatever reason when I
23 came into office, the office was still
24 prosecuting a small number of those people. We
25 are not going to do that. We need to spend our

1 time solving homicide, not arresting kids for
2 possession of marijuana when it's becoming legal
3 all over the country.

4 And then the other thing that we stopped
5 doing is we stopped prosecuting sex workers.
6 Meaning, if they did not have a long record for
7 it, we stopped giving them a criminal record for
8 it. And we did it because we believe that they
9 are victims. We believe that they are victims
10 of trauma, often sexual trauma. We believe many
11 instances they are suffering from addiction
12 disorder. And there are better ways to help
13 victims than to criminalize them. Put them in
14 jail cells, give them criminal records so it
15 becomes harder for them to recover.

16 Are we prosecuting Johns? In other
17 words, are we prosecuting the people who pay
18 them for sex? The answer is yes. Are we
19 prosecuting the people they work for? In other
20 words, their pimps? The answer is yes. That
21 has always been the answer.

22 So if you find yourself in a situation
23 where you are being told by law enforcement that
24 this DA's office will not prosecute a drug
25 dealer, you are being lied to. We prosecute

1 drug dealing of all types, including drug
2 dealing and marijuana. Those are the facts.
3 And the statistics are here. If you are being
4 told by people in law enforcement that we will
5 not prosecute people that break into your cars,
6 you are being lied to. We do it all the time.
7 And the data is here.

8 There are occasions, and this has
9 happened for example in San Francisco, when law
10 enforcement may not want to do something. They
11 may decide that they got better things to do, so
12 they don't want to do something. The battery
13 that got stolen from your car, they don't want
14 to do it. Let me tell us you what else they
15 don't want to do. They don't want to tell you
16 they don't want to do it. A lot easier to say,
17 oh, I can't do it, the District Attorney will
18 not prosecute.

19 Do you understand what I'm saying here?
20 This office is all about prosecuting drug
21 dealing, violent offenses. We are all about
22 prosecuting quality-of-life offenses in most of
23 these categories. And there should be no
24 misunderstanding between you as members of the
25 public and me. That is the bottom line.

1 Now part of our philosophy, and we are
2 very serious about this, is that it's more
3 important for us to focus on the most violent
4 and most serious crimes. And we are, in fact,
5 in the middle of an opioid crisis. What we know
6 about opioids from Center for Disease Control is
7 that people can start to become addicted on the
8 second day of a prescription to pills. Day two.
9 And for people who receive a prescription for
10 ten days to opioid pills, according to the
11 Center for Disease Control, 20 percent will
12 become addicted in ten days to opioids.

13 So, let me ask you a question? Why the
14 hell do we have so many pills being prescribed
15 by medical doctors? United States is gobbling
16 up about 75 percent of the prescription opioid
17 pills in the world. They don't do this in
18 countries all over the world because countries
19 all over the world don't tolerate it. And what
20 makes it even worse is that ten years ago, the
21 supply of pills allowed by the Federal
22 Government was one-fourth of the supplied pills
23 we have now.

24 So, why do you think there has been a
25 400 percent increase in the available pills in

1 the United States? It's money. Big pharma got
2 big money. They give big money to politicians.
3 People like Donald Trump, like him, because he's
4 a business man too. And he's, frankly, okay
5 with this country being flooded with those pills
6 with that level of addiction.

7 Once people become addicted, you know
8 what happens. They go back to the doctor
9 looking for more pills. The doctor gets
10 nervous, says, I got can't give you any more
11 pills. And then they go to the street and buy
12 heroin and by fentanyl and they die at a rate of
13 about three or four people every day in
14 Philadelphia. It is what? The third worst
15 county in the United States. And the only
16 reason the overdoses are coming down at all is
17 because the City has had the wisdom and the
18 Police Department has had the wisdom to put
19 Naloxone out there. We are able to save, who
20 knows, but more people because of Naloxone.

21 This is a real situation. The real
22 situation is that when you addict half a country
23 by letting the medical profession run amuck and
24 letting big pharma run amuck, you got a problem.
25 If you want big solutions, that means Federal

1 Government should clamp down on that supply of
2 pills from the 400 percent it is now back to the
3 100 percent or maybe clamp down even more. Bear
4 in mind, that there are hospitals in
5 Philadelphia now that have the wisdom that they
6 won't even give you opioids if you come in with
7 a broken leg. Jefferson hospital, you come in
8 with a broken leg, they let you leave with no
9 opioid. They'd rather see you in pain than see
10 you dead. They are absolutely right.

11 I know a young woman in the court system
12 who had bariatric surgery. She was having
13 weight issues, about 30 years of age. By one
14 year after her bariatric surgery, she was dead.
15 And she was dead because they thought it was a
16 good idea for someone leaving the hospital after
17 bariatric surgery who had already had some
18 issues with consumption, they thought it would
19 be a great idea to give her opioids.

20 This is completely unacceptable. And we
21 can all pretend that somehow even though the war
22 on drugs was a complete failure, we are going to
23 arrest our way out of it this time. Somehow,
24 even though prohibition of alcohol didn't even
25 work in the United States, we are just going to

1 prohibit it and it's all going to work this
2 time. Here is the news. That is not fair to
3 these police officers because they are not
4 miracle workers. They cannot change human
5 nature. They cannot change the fact that there
6 is four times as many pills and there should be
7 out there. The big solutions are going to have
8 to come at that level.

9 I guess the question then becomes, what
10 can we do under these circumstances? And the
11 simple is answer is, we can work together any
12 way possible. I had the pleasure of being in a
13 meeting with a couple of these Council people
14 yesterday with some people from the American
15 Civil Liberties Union to try to find a pathway
16 where the City can do some things without facing
17 a lawsuit. I don't know if it will go anywhere,
18 but I was happy to assist in arranging it. And
19 I hope it will. I know your lives up here are
20 incredibly difficult when you have people
21 because they are suffering from a disorder
22 called addiction are homeless and they are
23 defecating outside and leaving dirty needles and
24 they are shooting up in public. And your kids
25 see it. And your kids have to step over dirty

1 needles. I know how incredibly difficult that
2 must be.

3 This is not the only place this ever
4 happened. There is no easy solution to it. We
5 are not going to get anywhere unless we look at
6 it the through a health lens and realize that
7 substance abuse addiction is a disorder. It's a
8 disorder and disease. And if we can get public
9 health together with the City, together with law
10 enforcement, we may be able to make some
11 progress. I am open to all good ideas on this
12 topic and working with people, but I'm not open
13 to snooping. I'm not open to doing stuff that
14 has never worked or will never work because that
15 doesn't help anybody.

16 The truth is, that our crisis with
17 shootings and with homicide is directly related
18 to our crisis with opioids. And let us
19 remember, we actually right now have 3
20 percent -- this is according to Philadelphia
21 police. Violence is down 3 percent in the last
22 18 months, which is not all bad news. It is
23 down 3 percent. And those statistics include
24 all kinds of violent offenses. Among them
25 homicide and shootings, but that ain't good

1 enough because the homicides are up. The
2 shootings are up. And that carnage is
3 unacceptable. We also right now, if we look at
4 the police statistics, have seen that crime
5 overall is down 1 percent. One percent. All
6 right. Don't write anybody. Don't tell them a
7 miracle has happened. It's only 1 percent. And
8 the truth is, that's not really what most of us
9 are so worried about. We are more worried about
10 the reality that we have too many shootings and
11 we have too many homicides. And that's work
12 that we need to do. We need to try to get out
13 of that.

14 But this DA's office is open to all
15 intelligent, science-based approaches to getting
16 this done. And that is why we brought you this
17 data. That is why we gave it to the public.
18 That's why we rely so heavily on people like Wes
19 and Dakota running around here, to spend all
20 this time digging in on this data. We cannot
21 have conversations without the truth because
22 it's easy to say, oh my God, a terrible crime
23 happened. Well, yes, it did. But does that
24 reflect what's going on overall? Or something
25 bad happened to me. A police officer told me

1 that they can't arrest people who steal my car
2 battery because the DA won't prosecute it.

3 That's nonsense. In fact, that's a damn lie.

4 So, we're going to have to work with
5 what is true. And we are going to have to work
6 with what is science that we can try to get
7 somewhere. But hopefully, if we can work
8 together, we can all do that.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
10 Mr. District Attorney, for your comments.

11 I want to open it up so that our panel
12 can ask some questions. I do want to make one
13 remark, though. Which is that, we as public
14 servants, you know, people rely on us. We are
15 all sort of like the last line of defense. And
16 so, it really behooves each and every one of us
17 to work together.

18 We had a conversation earlier today
19 about the importance. Well, I made it a point
20 to talk about the importance that the District
21 Attorney's Office and the Police Department all
22 of your law enforcement officials really do make
23 every attempt to try to work together. And so,
24 I would just suggest that as we make comments to
25 suggest that someone is, you know, outright

1 lying because there is a difference of opinion,
2 that that is something that we probably want to
3 phrase maybe in a different way. I think,
4 again, if we have some difficulties with one
5 another, that we have to step back and have
6 those conversations off to the side and deal
7 with them to find ways that we can all work
8 together. But we certainly don't want to give
9 the impression to the public that we are not all
10 working together and trying to address some of
11 the things that are happening in these
12 neighborhoods and have people basically
13 terrified.

14 And so, when we live in these
15 neighborhoods and you hear gunshots and you know
16 what's happening, I think that that's something
17 that we really have to be much more mindful of.

18 With that being said, anybody have a
19 comment?

20 Councilwoman Sanchez.

21 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: I want
22 to thank you for coming. I appreciate it. I
23 know your -- this is a continuation of a
24 conversation that started many, many months ago.
25 This is by no means the end of it.

1 I guess the challenge for folks, and I,
2 you know, you walked the area. We have seen the
3 area. The recognition that we have folks in
4 addiction who are living homeless in the street,
5 and the fact that every day in order for them to
6 feed their addiction, they are consuming drugs
7 four and five times a day. Well, four and five
8 times a day, they're victimizing someone to get
9 the money to buy the drugs.

10 So to Councilwoman Bass' point, not
11 disputing the data, but when you are a resident
12 who can't have a flowerpot, can't have a
13 barbecue, can't have a chair, how do we reassure
14 them that the public safety strategy -- and
15 again we are not going to arrest our way out of
16 it -- but how do we make people feel comfortable
17 when they are victims? And many times they
18 will -- no one is going to call the police to
19 say they stole their chairs. How do we make
20 them feel more comfortable that we are working
21 together to improve and restore their quality of
22 life.

23 MR. KRASNER: I think one thing we do is
24 present real data. What the real data shows is
25 that when there are arrests made and cases

1 prosecuted, that should be reassuring. Because
2 it means whatever they may have heard is not
3 correct. And what's correct is what the data
4 indicates. I think we have to take a
5 science-based approach. We have to answer these
6 real serious concerns, these fears, these
7 difficulties.

8 And trust me, I know how difficult they
9 are. I spent 30 years of criminal justice
10 career up in this area all the time. This is
11 bad. This is the worst than I ever remember it
12 during those years when I was up here
13 representing clients and whatever it may be.
14 This is rough. We have to let them know that we
15 are willing to come here. We are willing to
16 talk here. We are willing to share data. We
17 are willing to meet. And I am willing to meet
18 any time.

19 People don't know this, but I -- not
20 only do I talk to the police commissioner
21 probably two or three times a week by telephone,
22 but if there is issues, I text them. But he and
23 I, chief of police and chief prosecutors from
24 all over the county talk about the kinds of
25 issues we are having. This is not the only

1 place where there is an opioid crisis.
2 Although, it is truly a major crisis in
3 Philadelphia. So, they need to know that we are
4 looking at the science and looking at creative
5 solutions, intelligent solutions that are not
6 only going to be directed at getting at the
7 problem in ways that are effective, but that
8 also show a concern for the community itself.

9 You know as far as I'm concerned, my
10 door is wide open. You know, I will be
11 delighted to work with any anti-violence plan.
12 I'm more than happy to meet with these and other
13 Council people to work on solutions. I think
14 the Department of Health has to be involved.
15 And we have kicked around some ideas. I think
16 there are some ideas for how to do this in ways
17 that make more sense than locking everybody up,
18 which we all know doesn't work, but also our
19 response. Do involve or try to engage people in
20 getting them back to their family, getting them
21 into treatment, getting into the kind of
22 situation where they can think for themselves as
23 opposed to being so intoxicated on drugs that
24 they really are not in a position to make
25 intelligent decisions anymore.

1 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Larry.
2 And thank you again for meeting with the ACLU
3 and us and trying to come up with other ideas to
4 try to address this issue.

5 But what's your opinion on the "broken
6 window theory" about the quality of life issues
7 with crimes that are the smaller crimes? And
8 then when they sort of get ignored, it leads to
9 bigger crimes?

10 MR. KRASNER: So, broken windows can
11 mean a lot of things. It can mean widely
12 discredited theory that was used, for example,
13 in Ferguson, Missouri which amounted to, let
14 us -- I mean, I'll just be blunt. Let's
15 basically take every poor resident, most of them
16 Black residents, and let's write them up a
17 ticket because their grass is a little bit long
18 or let's give them a big fat ticket because they
19 got a broken taillight or let's go on them
20 because of broken window. We take a bunch of
21 people that don't have a lot of money, make them
22 go to court all the time. Make them pay a whole
23 bunch of fines. Better yet, we use that to fund
24 our revenue.

25 That was a disaster. Everything that we

1 saw in Ferguson with the rioting and so on was a
2 direct result of government praying on the poor
3 people. One of the words that was used about
4 this was hypocrisy. In other words, they ran a
5 third of Ferguson's budget off the backs of poor
6 people by writing them up for little stuff in a
7 way we never write up wealthy people and never
8 would write up people in Chestnut Hill. I think
9 if that is the kind of broken windows we are
10 talking about, that is a failure.

11 If we look at what happened in New York,
12 the tools that they are always bragging about
13 were illegal stop and frisk and then what they
14 called a "broken windows theory" where you clamp
15 down as hard as possible on small offense. And
16 they claim it was a huge victory for New York.
17 What they didn't mention, this was not done in
18 other cities like Chicago where crime came down.
19 The other thing they did not mention is when
20 they stopped doing things like broken window and
21 stop and frisk, crime still went down.

22 Well, there are reasons why it went
23 down. One of those reasons, which none of New
24 Yorkers want to talk about because they like to
25 take credit, is that the average house price is

1 Manhattan is \$1.2 million, 1.2. The average
2 house price in Philly is about \$140,000. If you
3 basically price poor people completely out of an
4 area, you may have plenty of crime -- they might
5 be ripping us off on Wall Street causing the
6 mortgage collapse, but hedge fund managers are
7 usually not fighting over drug corners. That is
8 gentrification. That is not actually a solid
9 plan for reducing crime.

10 So that -- I think that is a fair
11 version of how I use the term broken windows.
12 Having said that, there are quality-of-life
13 crimes that need to be enforced in the sense
14 that we need to make sure that there are certain
15 things that are happening in the neighborhood
16 that do not make it difficult to live there or
17 to want to be there. That is where the line is.
18 Because we can always spend all of our time on
19 quality-of-life crimes and be where we stand
20 now, which is the rate for homicide is not as
21 high as we would like.

22 I have to tell you, I know that the
23 Department has tried very hard. And the
24 clearance rate is coming up. And I applaud them
25 for that. Most of us would like to see more

1 than 40 percent. Last year, 50 percent. This
2 year clearance rate for homicide, I can't
3 prosecute those homicides if I never get them.
4 As all of you know, if there is one shooting and
5 don't nip it in the bud, you don't get ahold of
6 a lot of people quickly, you are liable to
7 retaliatory shootings back and forth. It's
8 really important to get to those cases early.

9 Once again, I applaud everything that's
10 being done in the Department to clear shooting
11 cases. But the clearance rate for shooting
12 cases is lower. It's more on the order of
13 30 percent depending upon what year you are
14 looking at and so on. We have to prioritize.
15 And if we really are going to try to get our
16 arms around violent crime, we are not going to
17 do it by bringing back Ferguson and penalizing
18 people for minor offenses that they really can't
19 afford to deal with.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We are not talking
21 about minor offenses. And there are some
22 quality-of-life concerns that you think should
23 be enforced. What are they?

24 MR. KRASNER: I mean, there are about
25 200 different things.

1 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Give me five.

2 MR. KRASNER: Okay. Well, first of all,
3 any type of drug dealing activity, that should
4 lead to arrest. Why would we not arrest them?
5 Bring charges in every one of those cases. We
6 take that stuff very seriously. There are all
7 kinds of progressive places in countries around
8 the world, but they are all prosecuting drug
9 dealers. That's what you do.

10 Another one would be when you have
11 people who are trafficking women or they are
12 trafficking labor, you basically have people who
13 are not the victims of this but you have people
14 who are profiting from it. We go after those
15 people vigorously. We catch more of them. I
16 consider that to be a pretty terrible thing to
17 do.

18 When you have people who are, you know,
19 going up and down the street opening all the car
20 doors and going through your change, give me
21 those cases. I know they are hard to catch. I
22 know that. I think often what we have in this
23 situations is police are just not in a position
24 to have the perpetrator. They haven't actually
25 observed it. When we get it, we bring it. I

1 know it's incredibly annoying to have people in
2 your cars messing up your car and this sort of
3 thing. Car theft. That car is a big deal to
4 you. That car is maybe the only way you get
5 your kids where they got to go and get to work.
6 We prosecute those cases.

7 I understand these are not homicides.
8 These are not shootings, but they do affect your
9 quality of life. My home was burglarized twice.
10 I lived up in the northwest for 26 years. It
11 was burglarized twice. That is really an
12 obnoxious crime. It affects the quality of life
13 even though none of us were home. Even though
14 no one was hurt. It's rough.

15 That is the kind of stuff you prosecute
16 and prosecute vigorously. Honestly, I could go
17 on and on. I consider those to be the real
18 priorities.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I appreciate that.
20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

22 Any additional questions? Comments?

23 Okay. Councilman Domb.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: This is just an idea.

25 I wanted to just ask you, I'm not sure.

1 Kensington and Allegheny down to Kensington and
2 Lehigh, that area under camera?

3 MR. KRASNER: I don't know offhand. I
4 think probably some police colleagues could
5 answer that better for you.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: In your opinion, would
7 cameras be a possible help if we can pay for
8 monitoring of them once we put them in?

9 MR. KRASNER: I, as prosecutor, I love
10 cameras. I love cameras. About half of our
11 homicides anymore actually involve video. That
12 absolutely was not the case 15 years ago. They
13 greatly increased the chance of getting a
14 conviction. They greatly decreased the chance
15 of having an innocent person identified.

16 The show us the sequence of events
17 exactly how it happened. And we can tell a lot
18 about criminal intent from cameras. So, I'm a
19 huge fan of cameras. I just wish, you know -- I
20 just wish they were all HD. I wish they would
21 capture everything like it had been made in
22 Hollywood. Sometimes they don't. Even the ones
23 that just give you silhouettes are so important.
24 And I just think that investing in cameras would
25 be an incredibly important thing to do.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm just wondering if
2 it's your opinion that we should invest in high
3 quality cameras in these areas to, one, be able
4 to capture what's going on; two, be able to
5 prevent what's going on if people are even aware
6 of it?

7 MR. KRASNER: The answer is yes. SEPTA
8 has a marvelous system of video. Needless to
9 say, it's -- we have been able to solve crimes
10 off of SEPTA video. We have been able to see
11 the video of the person who might be the
12 perpetrator who came into the subway station,
13 put his palm down on the bench. And then we can
14 go and take the palm print off the bench and put
15 together whole cases. I mean, it's incredibly
16 important stuff. And to the extent we have more
17 of it, it can only help.

18 I realize we can't spend all of the
19 money on cameras, nor should we. I do think
20 that they are important way to solve crime also
21 as a really good deterrent to having bad
22 activity to certain locations, especially once
23 you clean out the corner and put cameras.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I know that today we
25 have a meeting on gun violence. Those hot spots

1 we talked about, would better cameras in those
2 areas be a big help?

3 MR. KRASNER: I would say yes. I do
4 want to defer, though, to my police colleagues
5 here. I know it's not simple. Sometimes you
6 put up a camera and it's taken down in a day.
7 Sometimes there are situations in which it's not
8 exactly what law enforcement is looking for. I
9 don't want to speak for them. But I can tell
10 you from my perspective, good video tells the
11 truth. Ain't nothing better than the truth when
12 you are doing law enforcement.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you very much.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Unless there
15 are any additional questions, thank you so much
16 Mr. Krasner for attending, for your comments
17 this evening. We really appreciate you and look
18 forward to working together to address all of
19 these issues that we have in our City.

20 MR. KRASNER: Thank you. Appreciate it.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Can we have the
22 clerk call the next panel?

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: From the
25 Administration, we will have Mr. Brian

1 Abernathy, Managing Director; and Tumar
2 Alexander, First Deputy Managing Director's
3 Office.

4 (Audience member speaks out.)

5 MS. AUMENT: Excuse me, Councilwoman
6 Bass. Is he leaving? Because how do we, the
7 community, get the rebuttal answer to what he
8 says? He stood here and said that he's proven
9 he's arresting people. According to this, he's
10 only convicted 44 people of drug charges in
11 2019. Between 2018-19, only 60 charges. So,
12 you are letting him walk out. He's not going to
13 be to able to answer --

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Hold on, Marnie.
15 Did he leave yet? Is he still here?

16 MS. AUMENT: He does this every time.
17 He leaves you people on the hot spot with them
18 and he walks out of districts that you, you and
19 us and the community.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Hold on. We have --
21 his Chief of Staff.

22 MS. AUMENT: He won't be able to answer
23 questions.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Are you available to
25 speak on his behalf or see if he's able to come

1 back and take questions on behalf of the
2 community? Thank you so much. Check and ask
3 him to come back in so that we can have the
4 community ask him.

5 MS. AUMENT: Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 (Chief of Staff checks on Councilwoman's
8 request.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I appreciate that.
10 And I think that's very important, obviously.
11 People want to hear and have their questions
12 answered directly. So, that's very important.

13 Hopefully, we will be able to get him to
14 come back in here. Thank you.

15 Thank you, Marnie.

16 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So, we have
18 Mr. Brian Abernathy from Managing Director's
19 Office. We have Tumar Alexander. We are going
20 to get started. Hopefully, he will be able to
21 come back in for a few minutes.

22 But why don't we start with you two
23 gentleman, and then bring in the rest of the
24 panel.

25 MR. ABERNATHY: Thank you, Councilwoman.

1 My name is Brian Abernathy. I'm the City's
2 Managing Director. I'm joined by Tumar
3 Alexander, my First Deputy.

4 First, I want to thank you for having
5 this conversation in this community. I am going
6 to turn it over to Tumar to walk through the
7 progress we have made in Resilience shortly. I
8 wanted to lay a short context around what the
9 Resilience Project is and why we structured it
10 the way that we did.

11 When we are looking at the opioid
12 epidemic, we recognize that oftentimes we talk
13 about those who are addicted, the people who are
14 suffering the terrible disease, people who are
15 dying, who are -- and their family members. But
16 this addiction also affects the community people
17 who live here, who have to deal with these
18 issues and the quality of life on day in and day
19 out basis.

20 When we set up Resilience Project, it
21 was really geared to try to tackle both issues
22 at the same time. We recognize that we are not
23 going to be able to resolve the opioid crisis.
24 We are not going to be able to tackle the
25 challenges of Kensington, Harrowgate and

1 Fairhill without tackling both issues
2 simultaneously. We pulled together 35 different
3 City agencies to meet on a regular basis,
4 multiple departments bringing different
5 perspectives and trying new things. The intent
6 was to make sure that we broke down barriers, we
7 broke down silos and we heard different
8 perspectives, and that we weren't afraid to
9 fail. That we were willing to try things that
10 we wouldn't normally try. We wouldn't allow
11 bureaucracy to get in our way.

12 We made a lot of progress in the last
13 eight months. A lot of progress that Tumar is
14 going to go through with you. But we also
15 recognize we have a lot more to do. Our kids
16 are still seeing people shoot up in the middle
17 of the street. People are still walking over,
18 people who have nodded out on the sidewalk.
19 There are still open prostitution, open drug
20 use, violence. And a host of quality of life
21 issues. Which is why the Mayor has extended the
22 order and why we are continuing to do our work
23 on a daily basis.

24 We own these issues. We recognize that
25 we are not perfect. We recognize that we made

1 mistakes. We expect the community to hold us
2 accountable to those mistakes. We expect you to
3 make sure our feet are to the fire to make sure
4 we continue to do better. We are committed to
5 doing that. We are not leaving this effort. We
6 are not leaving Kensington, Harrowgate or
7 Fairhill or any of the other surrounding
8 communities to deal with this on their own.

9 We have done that for too long as a
10 City. We are here to stay until we actually
11 find the path forward to some solve some of
12 those issues.

13 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank
14 you. Before Tumar starts, I want to just remind
15 folks when you walked in at the table, we had a
16 booklet that was submitted to us by the
17 Administration, the Resilience Project At Work.
18 And there was also a slide presentation at the
19 desk. So, this is the material that both the
20 Managing Director and the Deputy Managing
21 Director will be eluding to. They are all
22 available at the table.

23 MR. ALEXANDER: In both English and
24 Spanish.

25 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: And they

1 are bilingual.

2 MR. ALEXANDER: Good evening. My name
3 is Tumar Alexander, First Deputy Managing
4 Director. If you can, I just want you all to
5 allow me to walk through a small slide that
6 talks about the accomplishments we have made in
7 Project Resilience and the Resilience Project
8 over the course of the last eight months along
9 with my colleague Brian Abernathy. We
10 acknowledge, we have a lot of work left to do.

11 When this project first started, we were
12 tasked with creating seven mission areas.
13 Mission Area 1, to clean up vacant encampments.
14 Key accomplishment from that mission area is, we
15 cleared all major encampments. What's next is
16 work left to do, is transitioning. This mission
17 area, create and implement a community and
18 economic development strategy that focus on
19 vacant land and vacant buildings within the
20 Kensington area, each division community,
21 finalizing a policy with the Managing Director
22 Office's to prevent and address future
23 encampments from popping up City-wide. Not only
24 in Kensington.

25 Mission Area 2: Reduce criminal

1 activity. So far we have expanded the Police
2 Assisted Diversion Programs to the East
3 Division. We have stood up at least two shifts
4 of workers for this program. And are looking to
5 actually do three shifts where we have 24-hour
6 coverage. We have launched Safe Corridors
7 programs in six schools, and looking to do them
8 in others.

9 We have installed the -- working with
10 the Streets Department, we have installed over a
11 thousand LED City lights and issued cameras
12 under the Frankford El line. We have launched
13 the Warrant Initiative resulting in 180 arrests
14 in 6200 -- \$262,000 worth of narcotics to get
15 guns off the street.

16 Work left to do is recruit more
17 volunteer and expand the Safe Corridors program
18 to more schools, continue interagency workforce
19 on identifying and taking down violent to
20 high-level drug trafficking organizations.
21 Coordinate implementation of the Philadelphia
22 Roadmap for Safer Communities, the citywide
23 violence prevention strategy in two pinpoint
24 areas in the Kensington area.

25 Mission Area 3: Reduce the number of

1 unsheltered areas. Through the work of
2 Resilience, we have expanded emergency and
3 temporary housing to 220 beds. We have added
4 210 long-term housing opportunities for those in
5 need. We provided over 45,000 beds night for
6 over 500 people.

7 Work we have let to do in that area is
8 grow the number of low barrier, permanent
9 supportive housing units in the whole City.
10 With a target of 250 per year Citywide. We have
11 also made a commitment to the District
12 Councilmembers that we would look to repurpose
13 and relocate our respite centers off of
14 Kensington Avenue to allow forward use and
15 setting up that area for more business purposes,
16 more business.

17 Mission Area 4: Reduction of our Trash
18 and litter. So far we hosted seven large-scale
19 community volunteer clean ups. Thank you to the
20 folks behind me. Not only to the City staff,
21 but also to the community for participating and
22 volunteering with us each month. On those clean
23 ups, we have removed over 600 abandoned
24 vehicles, launched new programs to remove
25 discarded needles. We setup safety needle drop

1 box. We started a new street sweeping program.

2 Work left to do is continue widespread
3 community cleanups, install several large needle
4 drop boxes this summer, expand the Doors and
5 Windows Program Citywide, launch a volunteer
6 community program to where we want to figure out
7 a way to provide a stipend to folks or various
8 blocks to sort of help us keep areas clean and
9 help us target quality-of-life issues that we
10 can then address as a City government.

11 Mission Area 5: Reduce overdoses that
12 spread infectious diseases. We have conducted
13 nearly 2,500 HIV tests with the kids in the
14 community. We distributed opioid prescription
15 guidelines for more than 16,000 healthcare
16 providers by mail and 1,300 providers directly
17 by in person outreach. We have provided all
18 Fire Department, ambulances with "leave behind"
19 Naloxone to distribute in response to overdose
20 calls. We still need to expand our Needle
21 Exchange Program, continue distribution and
22 training of Naloxone and support the research
23 into these establishment of possible
24 establishment of overdose throughout the City.

25 Mission Area 6: Increase treatment

1 options. So far, we have launched treatment of
2 the availability database which provides
3 realtime information about availability of beds
4 to both the provider community and to the
5 community at large. So now that folks have a
6 person that wants help, we are able to do that
7 on demand. Folks can go and see where these
8 beds are located. What's the availability to be
9 able to connect people in a more rapid fashion.

10 We expanded the "warm handoff" program
11 at Temple Main and Episcopal campuses. We have
12 contracted with First Step Staffing Solutions to
13 connect individuals to recovery. Connect
14 individuals in recovery to entry level
15 employment. And we have created EMS Alternative
16 Response Unit staffed by paramedics in case a
17 manager can offer a warm handoff and help us
18 sort of divert EMS calls and be able to address
19 more important issues and circumstances.

20 Work left to do: We need to expand our
21 24/7 treatment capacity, increase the number of
22 hospital warm handoffs and treatment, adopt
23 additional provider payment strategies that
24 incentivize high quality care, and continue to
25 identify and rapidly address areas to care and

1 treatment.

2 Last Mission Area: Mobilizing community
3 resources. So far, we have formed and convened
4 the Community Advisory Committee. We recruited
5 over hundreds of volunteers, hosted 25 community
6 and civic meetings, launched dedicated bilingual
7 311 pods specific to the Kensington area to
8 resolve quality-of-life service issues in this
9 community at more rapid increase.

10 Work left to do is work with the
11 community on plans to sustain Resilience Project
12 work beyond 2019 and raise public and private
13 funding to leverage local investments to support
14 community organizations.

15 That, in a nutshell, is a report on the
16 work we have been doing. We know there is a lot
17 of work left to do. I will let Brian walk
18 through some of the what's next. A big piece of
19 what's next for us is working with you all,
20 working with the police, working with our law
21 enforcement partners and the community as it
22 relates to public disruption strategy.

23 MR. ABERNATHY: Thank you, Tumar. I am
24 going to be quick because I think we want to get
25 to questions fairly soon.

1 First, we know we still have a lot of
2 work to do. If Resilience is going to be
3 successful, it has to be sustainable. We can't
4 continue the same level of staff and resources
5 that we have put in, in the last several months.
6 But we also can't leave a Vacuum, which is what
7 we are not going to do.

8 We are going to continue to work with
9 the community to establish cross-sector
10 partnerships to sustain Resilience. Part of
11 that is going to be around fundraising and
12 engaging in business community and foundation
13 community in a very real way to invest here to
14 support the neighborhood. We also need to
15 develop and implement community development
16 plan. Economic developments, bring back that
17 commercial corridor as well as provide
18 affordable housing to much of our vacant stock.

19 We have expanded the successful aspects
20 of our work to neighborhoods with similar needs.
21 And we also need to coordinate implementation of
22 Philadelphia Roadmap for Safer Communities. And
23 that's where I am going to actually stop. The
24 one thing I am most frustrated by with
25 Resilience, the thing that keeps me up at night,

1 the thing I know, Councilwoman, you are most
2 frustrated by, is the level of violence in this
3 community. We have not succeeded. We have not
4 succeeded in curbing the open air drug dealing.
5 We have not succeeded in curbing open area drug
6 use. We have not succeeded in dealing with the
7 shootings happening on a daily basis.

8 We have to be more aggressive. The
9 police department and outreach have already
10 started a more aggressive campaign to deal with
11 the open area drug use. We are exploring
12 different models that other cities have started
13 to open, including a model in Louisville called
14 The Living Room, which is similar to a model
15 that Councilwoman Sanchez brought to us which
16 allow us to take people into custody, bring them
17 to a place where social services are offered.
18 While I don't think we can detain them, we can
19 certainly engage them in a different level and
20 disrupt the behavior that is disrupting these
21 people's day-to-day lives. That's really what
22 this comes down to. We can't allow the illegal
23 activity to continue.

24 I want to thank all the people behind
25 us. I want to thank the staff who have worked

1 tirelessly on this issue. This has taken a lot
2 of time. This is draining work. It is hard
3 work. And how they do it on a day-in and
4 day-out basis is something that I question.
5 Because frankly, I don't think I can do some of
6 the work that they do.

7 And I also want to thank the community.
8 What all of you have had to suffer and work
9 through is a failure on government's part. And
10 not just local government, but on federal and
11 state government, failure on the business
12 community, on the philanthropic community. And
13 I apologize for those failures that have
14 happened for the last several decades, the lack
15 of investment and lack of attention that your
16 communities have suffered.

17 But I want to thank you for working with
18 us. I know we have had our bumps. I know we
19 have had some bruises and scrapes. But I hope
20 you know at this point I -- what I say is what I
21 mean. And whether you agree with me or
22 disagree, we are going to -- we are not going
23 anywhere. And I appreciate the support, the
24 words of encouragement and sometimes the words
25 of keeping me honest and my feet to the ground

1 and my feet to the fire because we couldn't do
2 this work without these people. They are an
3 incredible community that I am in awe of every
4 day.

5 We are happy take your questions.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Thank you
7 very much for your commentary.

8 Questions?

9 Councilwoman Sanchez.

10 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: First
11 let me say that there is no question -- there
12 has never been a question in my mind that the
13 Administration has really taken itself out of
14 the traditional box and tried to address this.
15 I think Resilience is an example of all
16 hands-on-deck approach. And I agree with you.
17 We can work hard, and now we got to work smart.

18 I think part of the frustration that I
19 have from our residents has been, and I want to
20 strongly highlight for you as you move to the
21 sustainability of Resilience, I think it's
22 really important that, hopefully, this summer --
23 and I think the test going to be what we tell
24 residents today this summer is going to look
25 like for them. We have lost the trust of the

1 residents. And we have lost the trust of the
2 residents because there have been parallel
3 conversations with providers, with whether you
4 talk about safe injection site, whether you talk
5 about the Drexel study which many people believe
6 is very flawed. And that's a separate
7 conversation.

8 What can you tell me today that is going
9 to help us get to a place? Because there is no
10 trust and faith in us, right? And I say us, and
11 I include ourselves. As Councilwoman Bass says,
12 we are all in this together.

13 What one, two, three things people are
14 going to see differently this summer that is
15 going to help us gain the trust that we are
16 committed to restore their quality of life in
17 every single block in this community?

18 MR. ABERNATHY: I think there is going
19 to be two things that I think are going to be
20 key. One is our law enforcement strategy. How
21 are we going to do with public safety? How are
22 we tackling open air drug use and open air drug
23 dealing? What is our aggressive policing
24 strategy look like? I certainly can bring up
25 the Deputy Commissioner and Inspector to talk

1 through that in little more detail.

2 We have to disrupt the illegal activity
3 that is happening outside of these people's
4 doors. If we can't do that, we are never going
5 to be able to earn trust of this community. We
6 are committed to finding ways to do that. We
7 may be. What we try this summer may not work,
8 then we are going to try something new in August
9 and then try something new in September. We are
10 going to have honest conversations. That when
11 we fail, I own it.

12 I think the other issue that we are
13 going to have to continue to work on the
14 cleanliness and litter. We can't have kids
15 seeing and be stepping on needles. We can't
16 have mounds of trash and human feces laying on
17 the sidewalk. We have to figure out a way to
18 maintain a level of cleanliness we are committed
19 to.

20 We started a street cleaning pilot
21 in this community. We have learned very quickly
22 that it's a large area with significant issues.
23 And we are going to have to dedicate more
24 resources to it. But we need to be visible. We
25 need to continue the work. And we also need to

1 continue these dialogues. I need Shannon
2 Farrell to yell at me. I need Marnie to yell at
3 me. And neither of them are shy to do it, but I
4 need to make sure we have open communication.
5 So that when we are making mistakes, things are
6 happening in the street that we don't know or,
7 frankly, I say some boneheaded thing in the
8 press, which has been known to happen, they
9 should have the outlet to be able to have that
10 communication so we can at least begin that
11 dialogue.

12 We can't do this without the community.
13 We have to have to trust. We have to have
14 working relationship. We are committed to do
15 whatever we can to make that happen.

16 MR. ALEXANDER: Just to add this third
17 thing in addition to public safety, in addition
18 to cleanliness, I think what you will see from
19 us this summer, a more focused effort on
20 providing services on demand onsite to those
21 mission areas. All of the Mission Areas,
22 whether Mission Area 5 or Mission Area 6, we
23 have been talking about how to coordinate. And
24 we can have Liz and others come up and talk in
25 detail about this. But we have been talking

1 about how to coordinate our outreach efforts to
2 where people see us and where they are going
3 to -- where they are most visible in the
4 streets, in the community. We are going to do
5 that in a more deliberate way of bringing the
6 services to those corners. Hopefully, get those
7 folks access to the services. Hopefully,
8 beginning treatment, go back home or something.

9 But I think in addition to the two
10 things Brian mentioned, that's something you are
11 going to see from us in a more visible way
12 throughout the course of this summer.

13 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: So
14 before -- I do want them to come up and give us
15 public safety strategy. We started 311 in
16 Kensington Resilience phone. Is that work -- is
17 that still working?

18 MR. ALEXANDER: Yes.

19 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: One of
20 the biggest issues as we deployed people from or
21 moved people from whether Emerald Street that
22 started hopping up again and others, we have
23 more and more people breaking into vacant
24 properties along the City.

25 So in addition to the public safety that

1 Sullivan will speak to, what is the time frame?
2 Because what I don't want us to do is -- what is
3 the time frame between people calling that
4 people have broken into a house, that L&I
5 response? And does the emergency declaration
6 allow us to do things differently versus this 30
7 days citation to clean and seal?

8 How can we make sure that within 24/48
9 hours we are reclaiming these properties and
10 sealing the properties quickly?

11 MR. ALEXANDER: I would say, one of the
12 things we are doing is through L&I, quite
13 frankly, is provide more resources. We have
14 been spending overtime every weekend for the
15 past few months working on clean-and-seal
16 requests in the community. A lot of time that's
17 on the -- we get a lot of request through police
18 the whether it's some crime initiative or
19 something regarding public safety.

20 We tend to do those things within 24 or
21 48 hours notice. As much as we can, we want to
22 do due process to provide violation and send the
23 folks at the same time we are responding to
24 those. We sort -- because of this project, we
25 have probably eliminated the notification

1 process as it relates to handling abandoned cars
2 differently. We are more rapidly getting to
3 those requests. I think Joanna can come up to
4 talk to the value we have been seeing in 311.
5 We have towed hundreds of cars in this area in a
6 more rapid process. 600 cars in this area in a
7 more rapid process. L&I commissioner has
8 committed that overtime resource to us until we
9 need it, quite frankly.

10 So, we have been doing that and doing
11 things in a more urgent fashion in this area as
12 it relates to this emergency declaration. I
13 will let Jo talk about specific time frames as
14 it relates to the 311.

15 MS. CRUZ: Good evening, Councilwoman.
16 Joanna Otero Cruz, Deputy Director. So since
17 the pilot came up, we have over 14,000 requests
18 that have come in. All of our service
19 departments -- and I can get you specificity --
20 but it's about 34 percent of an improvement in
21 terms of the wraparound. Each one is distinct,
22 and we can get you those details. Overall, it's
23 about 34 percent an improvement in terms of the
24 wraparound response to each request. And that
25 includes Litter, L&I.

1 We've been working with clean-and-seals
2 in particular.

3 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: So, what
4 I would like to see for this summer and I want
5 to leave here knowing what we are going to use
6 the emergency declaration to change the rules of
7 and regulation by which we normally. As you
8 know, when I get the email, it's because they
9 got the response. It's 30 days. We have to
10 cite the owner.

11 If we know it's an emergency and someone
12 calls for a vacant property, you don't need to
13 respond today but over the next week we need to
14 say, we are going to respond four days, five
15 days. We are going to seal the property.
16 Because that's what shows us we are going to
17 respond if we have the acknowledgment that we
18 have 500 people in addiction homeless in a
19 concentrated area.

20 MR. ALEXANDER: We agree. As part of
21 over weekly executive team, Joanna -- that's one
22 of the reports Joanna goes through with that
23 weekly 311 call/request. Those departments in
24 the room and respond. We talk about the time
25 frame. We -- that's every Monday an opportunity

1 for us.

2 MS. CRUZ: In addition to that, we do
3 have supervisors that are following up with the
4 residents just to let them know where we are in
5 the process. May not like the response, but at
6 least getting feedback as where it's at in the
7 process.

8 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Can we
9 figure out -- again, as you guys really thought
10 outside the box about these calls. Can we
11 figure out the way that, again, when we are
12 talking about people squatting, taking over
13 properties, when you call people back, do you
14 elevate the level, right?

15 MS. CRUZ: Yes.

16 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: We --
17 this issue of people on blocks -- again, we are
18 spreading people out just. Because people are
19 not in a major encampment doesn't mean people
20 aren't encamping. They are just all over the
21 place.

22 And then how many beds -- we are no
23 longer -- how many beds are currently available?
24 And how are we willing to do more handoffs so
25 that, yes, we want the house clean and sealed

1 because we don't want people actively using
2 them. How many of those are turning to people
3 actually going somewhere?

4 MR. ALEXANDER: We will have a
5 representative come up.

6 MS. CANCELLIER: Councilmembers, I'm
7 Roberta Cancellier, Deputy Director of Housing
8 Services, social worker. I have family members
9 that suffer from addiction. I'm a proud member
10 of the team.

11 So, we have added about 220 beds and
12 emergency shelter beds for people who are
13 experiencing homelessness. And those people can
14 get those beds either by primarily by outreach,
15 by walking sometimes just by some of the steps.

16 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: How
17 long -- again, this is the initial coordination.
18 When we go to seal a property, like when we
19 think, will outreach/other people be called, so
20 that we are trying -- again, because of the
21 level of human trafficking, some of the
22 prostitution is up, can we ensure that there is
23 going to be connectivity around that, right, to
24 ensure that when we are cleaning and sealing and
25 potentially removing people?

1 Now, that we are doing that, is
2 something there?

3 MS. CRUZ: Yes. That's the benefit of
4 311. Coming into the central for service. That
5 allows to us coordinate at that level.

6 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: I think
7 you said you are going to have DC Sullivan come
8 up real quick? We want to get to our community
9 panel. We appreciate everyone's patience. I
10 don't want to turn to where we can't listen to
11 each other.

12 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You can begin your
14 testimony.

15 MR. SULLIVAN: Hello again.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please, state your
17 name for the record.

18 MR. SULLIVAN: Good evening, Members of
19 Council. My name is Deputy Commissioner Joe
20 Sullivan. And I command patrol operations for
21 the Philadelphia Police Department. I am also
22 the Department's representative through the
23 Resilience Project.

24 Hello, again. Just like to say in terms
25 of the Resilience Project, to begin with, one of

1 the -- as my boss Mr. Abernathy mentioned, there
2 are times when we have missteps. And certainly,
3 the beginning, well, we realized that we may
4 have taken too soft an approach to some
5 unacceptable sidewalk behavior: The injections,
6 the defecation, the urination. That is being
7 addressed in a much more law enforcement
8 centered way in terms of stopping people. It
9 begins with an encounter and then we find out
10 that that person is -- at the same time, we
11 still offer services, but we make it clear that
12 these type of behaviors is not going to be
13 accepted anymore. And it's not acceptable to do
14 this in front of someone's home. And that it's
15 going to eventually result in arrest.

16 And we have been seeing some results.
17 Silver Street an Venter Street, right there and
18 Emerald Street start to become almost another
19 encampment. Inspector Bachmeier is here. Can
20 talk about nature detail, you know, the rights
21 that was eliminated. And two individuals were
22 actually served warrants for very serious
23 matters.

24 One of the issues I do want to address
25 is, in terms of marijuana, it is the position of

1 this Police Department that the possession of
2 marijuana, user personal possessions, is best
3 handled by the issuance of civil violation
4 notices. And by doing so, we have kept
5 thousands of young men and women out of the
6 criminal justice system. It's been, in our
7 mind, a successful program.

8 We certainly do not think that people
9 simply use marijuana are violent people because
10 that is certainly not true. But the people that
11 sell marijuana illegally here in this
12 neighborhood and in neighborhoods all throughout
13 our City are making a lot of money. And they
14 are not afraid to use violence in order to
15 protect their market. So, we continue to
16 enforce the laws against marijuana sales for
17 that reason. And we will not stop. And there
18 are situations where we believe that person that
19 we had in this case are selling marijuana
20 because they know the small amounts on them,
21 they are not charged and we have been directed
22 to issuance.

23 I don't like to use the term reliance
24 because that's not what the police department
25 does. Marijuana is a problem. We will continue

1 to enforce all the drug laws including marijuana
2 against the people that are selling, the people
3 that are benefiting from it financially, and the
4 people that are utilizing violence on these
5 streets here in and throughout our City to
6 maintain control of those markets.

7 When we see the dealer selling, we have
8 to stop the person they are selling it to.
9 There are two different charges. One charge for
10 the sale of marijuana. There is another charge
11 for purchasing marijuana. In order to make a
12 conspiracy for the person selling marijuana, we
13 have to document that we have observed the sale
14 when we stop the person that bought the drugs.
15 This is where a lot of the misconception comes
16 in maybe in the neighbor, there is a difference
17 of opinion between myself and the District
18 Attorney's Office.

19 And in regard to theft, this department
20 arrests for theft and significantly Citywide.
21 The problem that we have is bail seizures. The
22 people that break into cars, do it -- most of
23 them are recidivists. Many of them have been
24 arrested over 30 times. I, personally, checked
25 bail decisions. And I am seeing people that

1 have more than 30 arrests being given ROR, and
2 they are released. One captain said it comes on
3 average the persons that are arrested for theft
4 and auto are back on the street within 5 hours.
5 It's very hard for me to impact the quality of
6 life when crimes like theft and auto are not
7 being taken seriously. No is suggesting first
8 time offenders should go to jail, but something
9 has to be done with the persons that are
10 breaking into cars over and over and over again
11 and costing people money that they simply do not
12 have.

13 This Department continues to make
14 arrests for prostitution with a large focus on
15 this area right here. The policy of the
16 District Attorney's Office is if a person has
17 less than three priors, they do not charge.
18 Well, it's a little hard to get to three priors
19 when they're not being charged. That being
20 said, we continue to enforce the law, make those
21 arrests, and they are not charged. But they
22 have a significant impact on the people that
23 live here in this neighborhood. So therefore,
24 we will continue to enforce those laws.

25 There are 64 declinations for

1 prostitution by the District Attorney's office
2 in the 24th District this year. In terms of
3 violation of the Uniform Firearms Act, I am very
4 proud to say that the Department has over 873
5 arrests for violations for Uniform Firearms Act
6 this year Citywide. That's 37 percent increase
7 over last year. And I think you can make a
8 connection between that and the violence that's
9 occurring throughout the City. We have taken
10 ever over 2000 guns off the street this year,
11 which is a significant increase.

12 Now speaking specifically Resilience.
13 We got off to a bad start this year. We have a
14 total of 12 homicides have occurred this year
15 with Resilience area. But in response to that,
16 Commissioner Ross in March sent 14 additional
17 foot beats into the 24th District to be employed
18 with the Resilience area at seven different
19 locations. Since March, we have only had -- and
20 I hate to say only -- but we have had one
21 homicide. So, I feel you can see the impact of
22 those foot beats that are having in terms of --
23 one area I certainly do agree with the District
24 Attorney is the importance of relationships with
25 the community.

1 The reason that the Commissioner
2 specifically ordered these officer be foot beats
3 would be that in addition to enforcing the law,
4 they would not be involved with barriers between
5 themselves and the community amid the
6 relationships, begin to build trust in people
7 somewhere that people can talk to. So far I
8 think we have been doing that. You have to say
9 it's widely -- well, significantly successful.

10 Councilman Squilla, you asked that
11 question about the broken windows theory. I
12 couldn't agree with District Attorney even more.
13 He was spot on, in my opinion, as well. We do
14 not go out into the neighborhood and stop people
15 for every minor violation. That goes strictly
16 against the whole theory of the ability to
17 establish trust and deal with relationships in
18 the community. But one of the things that we
19 do -- have done in Resilience is abandoned autos
20 and with the help of Mr. Alexander, addressing
21 abandoned houses, abandoned lots, troubled
22 businesses that are not operating in the best
23 interest of the community. These are ways
24 that -- I prefer the term quality of life. We
25 address quality-of-life issues with the -- with

1 you at the same time doing it in a way that we
2 are targeting and impacting those people that we
3 know are committing crimes, committing acts of
4 violence, impacting the quality of life of the
5 residents of this neighborhood instead of
6 targeting the neighborhood, which certainly we
7 have seen in other cities as an example of how
8 poorly that works.

9 At this point, I will leave it for any
10 questions.

11 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank
12 you. I want to take a moment and thank
13 Inspector Bachmeier for impacting the
14 Commissioner into the space. I don't know if
15 anybody had question. We want to allow -- the
16 community has been patient. I recognize
17 Councilman Green who has joined us.

18 If you gentleman can stick around, I am
19 going to let the panel of community residents
20 come up. And if you need to come back, we will
21 call you. Thank you.

22 So, we have Shannon Farrell, Marnie
23 Aument, Annette Mears and Felix Torres-Colon.
24 And then we will have Ken Paul, Pete Smith and
25 Sterling Johnson. And I think I saw Leo. Have

1 them on the second panel.

2 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Ms. Farrell, if you
4 want to state your name for the record and you
5 may begin your testimony.

6 MS. FARRELL: My name is Shannon
7 Farrell. I'm President of Harrowgate Civic
8 Association.

9 So for the past 18 years, I've been a
10 part of meetings of the Managing Director's
11 Office and Resilience. For 18 months, I ask the
12 same questions. One of the things they tell us
13 is that the demand being so high, it's hard to
14 go off the supply. Because when they do make
15 arrests of the drug dealers, more come very
16 quickly to replace them.

17 Couple of things I wanted to bring up
18 was having listened to that, and I believe that
19 to be true. I am witnessing this. We were told
20 that most barriers have been lifted for the drug
21 users in our community to access treatment. And
22 so for the most part, I always speak on behalf
23 of residents that live in homes and have lived
24 there long before we had been under siege by
25 them. The increase is astounding with this

1 opioid issue. And so, I said a couple of months
2 ago, I was going to start to look it from
3 another point. I think for the most part,
4 sometimes we don't listen to the drug users
5 because we think they come up with every excuse
6 to not go into rehabs when they come.

7 So, couple of things that come into
8 place that CBH doesn't not allow detox for
9 people who are on opioids. And if you choose to
10 not go into a CBH or go into assisted treatment,
11 you are turned away for help. And so, that's a
12 barrier. They don't want to go into medical
13 treatment because they can't make that kind of
14 commitment, if they want methadone and miss it,
15 if they don't get the dosage, they go back to
16 using. This should be their choice. Their
17 chose should be detox or going to medically
18 assistive treatment. They are not being given a
19 choice. That's against their rights. That's
20 not fair, and that is not helping us with the
21 user that would like the treatment.

22 The other thing they will tell us is
23 smoking ban that CBH has put on their providers.
24 That now they will access treatment, they are
25 not allowed to smoke cigarettes. We are setting

1 them up for failure. Not we are asking them to
2 give everything up and walk away. And we are
3 not letting them have access to treatment. And
4 then I meet with the Directors Office who tell
5 me they don't want treatment. And that we need
6 them to go to the treatment so they can be with
7 drug dealers in the neighborhood. We are not
8 lowering all the barriers. This is not working
9 for them. This does not work.

10 The CBH, City -- Brian Abernathy needs
11 to tell them to lift that smoking ban and that
12 these people have rights. If they want to go
13 into detox and not go on Suboxone or Methadone,
14 that's their choice. That helps get them off of
15 the street. Gets them away from drug dealers
16 who are violent in our community on the streets.
17 So if you are going to tell me the problem is
18 demand, then you have to make sure that the
19 demand to seek help when they need it.

20 Also, these drug dealers, they are
21 murderers. They are killing the drug users and
22 killing us when they shoot us. This is a
23 problem. This cannot continue. The violence in
24 our neighborhood is out of hand. Two weeks ago
25 I was sitting on my porch with my father.

1 Thirty bullets rang out in the street. And
2 18-year-old pregnant teenager took three bullets
3 in the chest. That never used to happen before.
4 That is not acceptable. There is no excuse for
5 this. They don't want to kill each other. They
6 are killing us and hurting us. This is -- as
7 far as we know, 18 months I met with the City
8 and go in with the same people, and they just
9 keep getting worse. It has to end.

10 I have enjoyed the clean ups in the
11 neighbor the Resilience Project has done. I
12 enjoyed the fact they like to sit and listen to
13 us, but it is not changing for anybody. And I
14 feel like now it's been -- sides against each
15 other. Now -- I do, I approve injection sites.
16 That's about where we differ.

17 Other than that, this needs to be done.
18 These people need the help. And you continue to
19 tell us they don't want to seek treatment when
20 they are not is just amazing to me. You can't
21 blame them for everything and not give them the
22 help. We cannot continue to allow violent drug
23 dealers to run our neighborhood. They control
24 the drug users. They control what happens, when
25 we are allowed to sit outside. The 30 bullets a

1 few weeks ago, the bullets went into the homes
2 where children are living. So now it's not safe
3 inside the homes. Now keeping kids off the
4 street doesn't matter. The bullets go through
5 the walls and the windows.

6 We cannot afford to move. We are a poor
7 community. We cannot continue to take this. It
8 is not okay to continue to make us live like
9 this. Now I don't know if the District
10 Attorney, he wants to blame, you know, other
11 things for it. I don't know. The police do not
12 usually give me that excuse. I am told the
13 demand needs to I go away. We are not doing a
14 good job of it at all.

15 These drug dealers are getting younger
16 in my neighborhood. On that corner where 30
17 bullets flew, there are 15 and 18 year olds
18 dealing in that area. That's insane. We never
19 had that before. So, now our kids are seeing
20 this, being traumatized and seeing their friend
21 and their older friends sibling now taking part
22 of this. Before it used to be weren't from that
23 area. Now talking to our kids to be involved in
24 the play.

25 I know there's a plan, a five-year plan.

1 A five-year plan is not good for my child. They
2 are ten and five. Ten and five would be fifteen
3 and ten. Their childhood is gone. It's not
4 fair. And it is not fair to them. We cannot
5 continue to live like this.

6 We don't have much. It gets stolen.
7 The drug users use this to support their habit.
8 We need them to be taken care of. We need more
9 things in place to help them get in treatment,
10 make treatment what they want. Make so that
11 they are doing something.

12 Treatment is a better option. If you
13 move them off the street, we need to move them
14 to families. Twice I have helped people go back
15 to families. That was a big reason they left
16 that neighborhood. I went and got help because
17 their family came and got them. We need that
18 support. We need to do a lot more than we are
19 doing. You cannot continue to make us -- we
20 have children that are shot. Some have
21 survived. Some have not. They are not --
22 that's not okay for this to happen.

23 Eighteen months I have sit with the
24 City, three times a month at least and said
25 these -- do something about it. This has not

1 changed. It increased. My neighborhood has
2 more users, more dealers, more crime happening.
3 I appreciate the efforts and the fact everybody
4 is paying attention and not just ignoring it.
5 The reason that you're here because we've been
6 here for years. So, something more has to be
7 done. More has to be done.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. AUMENT: My name is Marnie Aument,
11 M-a-r-n-i-e, A-u-m-e-n-t. All of you sitting
12 there know me. Maria, I walked around with you
13 and the District Attorney when he stood there
14 and said he will not prosecute anybody in a safe
15 injection site trying to keep from overdosing,
16 and he won't prosecute people that have health
17 issues, mental health using the drugs.

18 We've asked many times. If somebody it
19 out of control, there is a mechanism there for
20 the police to 302 them. We have been told it
21 cannot be done. I have met with Senator Street.
22 I have met with State Representative Cruz. I
23 reached out to the other delegates in
24 Philadelphia, senators and representatives. I
25 reached out to Congressman Boyle. We will be

1 meeting next week. There has to be a way that
2 us, the law abiding citizens' rights come into
3 play. None of us should have to have our
4 nine-year-old grandson child watch somebody
5 inject themselves in the penis with a needle,
6 watch somebody inject somebody else in their
7 neck with a needle. You cannot tell me anybody
8 in their right mind is allowing that to happen.
9 There has to be a way to end this.

10 If you walk up and down G Street, I have
11 open air markets 24/7. Yes, they arrested
12 somebody on G Street. They arrested somebody on
13 Hilton Street. One person out of ten. The rest
14 of them are still standing there and replace
15 them. They go to Wal-Mart and buy the \$40
16 canopy thing, set up underneath them and bring
17 their kids there to play. This is ridiculous,
18 and everybody feels bad when somebody is shot.
19 So, they never get shot. Their kid might get
20 shot. My kid might get shot. Shannon's kid,
21 but those are the worst shooters around. They
22 never hit each other.

23 You call Krasner here. I don't even
24 give him the respect from the District Attorney.
25 He's nothing but a defense attorney. And he's

1 proving that here today.

2 (Applause.)

3 Last May, Andre, you had visitation last
4 night. We had questions there. They said the
5 District Attorney would have the answer at
6 tonight's meeting. All he did was say his piece
7 and he got up and walked out. He's not
8 answering anything. You have launched a warning
9 issue for the zone, 180 arrests, \$262 and 20
10 guns off the street and reduced crime. Are they
11 running warrants on anybody? Why the
12 captains -- when officers are arresting people
13 because they don't have enough charges, they get
14 put right back on the street. He's not going to
15 get to three charges because he's not giving it
16 to them.

17 We are being held hostage and victims in
18 our own community. Some of us can move. We are
19 too stupid. We are staying here, and we're
20 fighting for our community. You come and you
21 hold these meetings, and then you go back to
22 City Hall and hold these meetings. Some of you
23 come and, you know, walk around, some of you
24 will give us that courtesy. You are not holding
25 other people accountable. Everybody sitting

1 here just ran for reelection last month. Every
2 single one of you got reelected. You are all
3 shoe-ins come November, aren't you? Every
4 single one of you sitting here.

5 Councilwoman has no running against her.
6 Mark, do you? Do you? Are you going to beat
7 them?

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Don't know.

9 MS. AUMENT: You know you will. The
10 Council At Large people sitting here, their are
11 five Democratic people that going up for
12 reelection. The other two would be Republicans.
13 They have to fight, not you.

14 What are you doing to actually help us?
15 What are you doing to make a difference in our
16 community? What are you doing to untie the
17 hands of the police officer even the Managing
18 Director's Office? We all see the Drexel
19 Report. We know what it says. Know what they
20 did? They gave out \$5 gift cards and tokens to
21 the junkies and said, yes, we want an opioid
22 prevention site in our neighborhood. Of course
23 you do, you want your Narcan.

24 On the same day, election day, I had a
25 junkie in the store -- and I will call them a

1 junkie. They went in the store at G and
2 Allegheny. When he bumped into the kid in the
3 store, the kid said something back. Outside he
4 stabbed that kid. That kid wound up at Temple
5 Hospital. Does anything happen to the junkie?
6 No. Oh, he's got a problem. Yes, but we have a
7 bigger one because you all are allowing them to
8 stay in our community.

9 They came from -- they probably already
10 in the system somewhere getting help. We have
11 people coming every day trying to -- I look at
12 your area here. You are going to start at K and
13 A and going up 8th Street and then over to
14 Sedgley and then back down and around. That
15 doesn't take in G Street, F Street, Hilton
16 Street, Raymond, Russell, Lippincott, Willard,
17 Madison. It's not taking into the rest of the
18 area. It's not taking you to the area where
19 people are getting shot.

20 You had a police officer shoot a
21 homeless man at G and Tioga. That homeless man
22 has a family, they just didn't want him there
23 because he's an addict. That homeless man
24 walked up and down with silver in his hand like
25 this. That officer came from another thing. Do

1 I like the fact that officer had to shoot
2 somebody? No. Was that man violent that night?
3 No. Has that man been violent? Yes. Yes, he
4 has. He screamed at people. He's yelled. He's
5 kicked your car. He has jumped out in between
6 cars. I have people that don't let their
7 children drive home that night even though
8 that's the fastest way to their house because of
9 that man being there. That is a sad state that
10 that man was shot begging for money to get his
11 drugs.

12 You are letting every single person --
13 you letting these officer stay in harm's way.
14 And if it's not you, then that's the District
15 Attorney. Because the police tell you one thing
16 and he comes back with another. I'm tired. I'm
17 tired of being lied to. I am tired of going
18 back to the community that says I sat in a
19 meeting at MSB Building, I sat at a meeting at
20 visitation, I sat at a meeting in Harrowgate,
21 Juniata, South Kensington, in this -- this is
22 where I hold my community meetings once a month.
23 Once a month.

24 I'm tired of doing meetings for us to
25 listen to the same rhetoric. You asked the same

1 questions. And so far, little things have been
2 changed. Little things have been done, but not
3 enough. The cleanups, that's great. When are
4 we going to have a sweep officer start going to
5 the guys who are doing dope and start fining
6 them? When are you going to change it so you
7 can't have six, seven, eight, nine fines coming
8 back? If he's a landlord, start taking their
9 properties. I guarantee you start taking their
10 properties and reusing them, we can have a
11 system.

12 You want to clean up the neighborhoods,
13 go start talking to the unions. Let them take
14 every vacant abandoned property that's sitting
15 on the sheriff sale list, let the community
16 groups work with the Carpenters Union, the
17 Electricians Union, the Plumbing Union. Get
18 them certified. Get them going. Get them
19 fixed. Let's take the women and children that
20 are living in shelters, the women and children
21 that are out of abused relationships, put them
22 back in our community. Let them come in. They
23 will open up a hell of a lot better shelters for
24 you to take every item and do what you want with
25 them.

1 You want to clean them up, get a
2 building. Take the City-owned building. Take
3 the state-owned building. Take the
4 federal-owned building. We have plenty of
5 schools not being used. Put them all in the
6 school. Bring the City's services down to them.
7 Let them stay someplace where they can't turn
8 around and say, I don't want this today but I
9 will take my free food. They are getting free
10 food, free shoes, free clothing, free haircuts
11 and then they get to just keep doing what they
12 want.

13 Meanwhile, of schmucks sitting here, we
14 are paying mortgages, rents, gas, electric,
15 water, food bills, clothing bills, hair dressers
16 for everything. We are being penalized years,
17 hand over hand to keep giving them everything.
18 Mt. Airy people, there is a group up there.
19 They feel sorry for them. That's great. You
20 feel sorry for them. I understand. The woman's
21 son died from addiction. She didn't let him
22 live in her house then. She let him go on the
23 street. Now he's dead. I'm sorry about that.

24 If you want to change this area, I will
25 gladly drive them to your house and give them to

1 you. I am sure everyone one of us would do
2 that. We're tired of being told we're going to
3 try something new. I understand Brian and
4 Tumar, they can't just do what they want to do.
5 I understand you can't always do what you want
6 to do because if it was up to us, I think half
7 of us right now are ready to take baseball bat
8 and show you how we really feel. And then I
9 guarantee the District will charge us.

10 I don't know the answer. I don't have
11 all the answers. And I know that you don't have
12 all the answers, but we have been going through
13 these meetings for almost two years. Two years
14 we have been discussing this. And has some
15 improvements, maybe. But with every improvement
16 that comes on, we get 22 steps back to where we
17 started from. And that's not fair to us. There
18 has to be something that can be done
19 differently.

20 Go to the state. Go to the federal
21 government. Everybody says this is a crisis
22 nationwide. Let Philadelphia be a pilot program
23 to change some things. I get everybody wants to
24 take care of the addicts' rights. That's great,
25 but what about our rights?

1 And just so we understand, there is a
2 big difference between a homeless person living
3 on the street that is there because she's
4 escaping an abusive relationship, lost their job
5 and lost their home to somebody that wants to be
6 there because they want to keep sticking that
7 needle in their body. That's a big difference.
8 I'm tired of being called homeless. They are
9 not homeless, they are doing exactly what they
10 want to do. They are saying, screw you to the
11 rest of us. We get to come and go and do what
12 we want. We have absolutely no penalties.

13 How do you teach a child to do the right
14 thing when you, the City, are allowing people
15 every day to break the law and nothing happens
16 to them? I was with Tumar Alexander, and I hate
17 to put you on the spot big guy. He said he did
18 a walk-through. He came down there three
19 o'clock when schools were getting out. The
20 apathy on the children's face just bobbing and
21 weaving an going between the needles and the
22 addicts is ridiculous. When we grew up, yeah,
23 everybody knew somebody who did drugs. It was
24 never, ever like this. Kensington was never
25 like this. Maria, we spent \$200,000 at the --

1 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Uh,
2 five million.

3 MS. AUMENT: Okay. The improvements got
4 put in there. The kids can't even go in and
5 enjoy it. They lost their park. They lost
6 their safety net. That's not fair. Those kids
7 had phenomenal time getting to play in that
8 playground, getting to put the benches where
9 they wanted to. They came out with flyers, the
10 City, Managing Directors Office, the Council
11 people, Wells Fargo. Everybody came out and
12 worked on building the playground together.

13 We had one needle in that park maybe
14 once a month they were finding. Now you can't
15 go up there. And there's a box for them to drop
16 it in. They can't even drop them in the box.
17 You are giving them every opportunity, and they
18 are throwing it back in your face. Enough has
19 to be enough. Something has to change.
20 Something has to be done differently. And sad
21 to say that you have to be held accountable for
22 it.

23 And it's not only us. There is a sign
24 in Las Vegas that says, go to Kensington, they
25 got the best drugs. That's offensive. Not only

1 i sit offensive to me being born and raised in
2 Kensington. I lived in the 700 block since
3 1970. But that's offensive to this City. And
4 that should be offensive to you Council people
5 that are trying to help people.

6 I don't know what all the answers are.
7 And I am thankful that you come to the community
8 to have these meetings because it's very hard
9 for everybody to get down there. I am even
10 thankful you are doing it at night because some
11 of us really do work. Not everybody is here,
12 you know, just sitting around doing drugs. Some
13 of us really work. But something has to be
14 done. Something has to change.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. TORRES-COLON: My name is Felix
18 Torres-Colon. I have to give remarks. One thin
19 I want to share is something. Everybody talks
20 about quality-of-life issues, right? And I feel
21 that minimizes, that hides, that takes away
22 what's really happening in our neighborhood.
23 Because what's happening in our neighborhoods --
24 and we now have more authority than in the
25 past -- is trauma inducing. And when you get

1 trauma, that has all kinds of bad effects.

2 The effect that young children, it
3 actually changes how their brains actually work
4 and not for the good. So you know, I think when
5 you talk about quality-of-life issues, I
6 understand what you mean. But what we have here
7 are trauma-inducing damaged and danger to our
8 kids, our neighbors, my employees. So, it's
9 more than quality-of-life.

10 Quality of life to me is, you're cutting
11 your grass. Not that you're avoiding needles,
12 that you not watch the people shoot up every
13 day, not that you see people have sex in public,
14 and not that people treat you as if you are dirt
15 because you are not a addict or you are not
16 dealing.

17 So with that, NKCDC mission is to
18 strengthen the physical, social and economic
19 fabric of the community. We do that in a bunch
20 of ways. We do that through economic
21 development. We do real estate development. We
22 talk about community engagement. We do
23 community engagement. We cut vacant lots and
24 clean vacant lots. We also have a Housing
25 Department that helps people with utility

1 issues, with title issues, with foreclosures.
2 Help folks who want to buy a home.

3 And before I -- I just wanted to say
4 that these two years of meetings we have been
5 having, the housing people for the City have
6 never been there. I'm not talking about the
7 homeless folks. I am talking about people who
8 control the \$20 million in trust fund who decide
9 who is tax money. The people who make the
10 serious decision about building affordable
11 housing in this community has never been to any
12 of those meetings. So, I always -- I mention
13 that in passing.

14 I am always surprised -- I am glad to
15 hear Brian talk about looking at the
16 development, building of housing, taking out
17 some of these vacant properties and they are
18 actually doing something with them. But as long
19 as housing is out in la la land, that's never
20 going to happen.

21 We have cases with -- that was our
22 commitment when we started working with the
23 neighborhood. As some have said, real estate.
24 Everything people talk about we see day in and
25 day out. For the staff, my staff work that --

1 the work in the neighborhood every day or
2 organizes commercial folks, they use to see all
3 this stuff that he was talking about. Now my
4 accountant sees people shooting up. It
5 certainly has been an amazing change for us, and
6 made us more passionate about what they are
7 doing.

8 Some of us just -- some people don't get
9 it. I think the -- first, I want to say
10 fortunately, we have people like Shannon and
11 Marnie. Because you know, they are warriors.
12 Warriors are not giving up the fight as much as
13 they can. But we need help.

14 The summer is coming and everybody knows
15 it's going to be lot worse. We can already see
16 it. I go out my office, and I notice that the
17 regulars are changing. I know we are getting
18 more regulars who come down, drug house or hang
19 out in that area. So we need to do -- we need
20 to develop, discuss, pilot new approaches. And
21 I believe that's great what the Council is doing
22 and looking at some of the stuff they want to
23 do. But in order to be successful, we need to
24 respect and learn from the residents, the
25 community institutions and local businesses.

1 We talked about the Drexel Study. To
2 mean, it's a clear example of how we get
3 ignored. It's not the first time nor the last
4 time that a voice of the poor community has been
5 ignored, challenged, disparaged by outsiders and
6 the elite. Community meetings, feedback from
7 City, overwhelming negative response of the
8 residents various ways weren't good enough.

9 Drexel did a study which was totally
10 false to show that everybody in the community
11 knows what they were talking about. That is
12 insulting. That is racist. That is classless.
13 I know you asked us questions. If you ask these
14 questions, you kind of get what's going on. You
15 asked, why was 3rd Street able to go for so
16 long? You asked, why -- (mumbles intelligibly)
17 allow to drive.

18 Why were the 10,000 people who signed a
19 petition in direct opposition to the OPS from
20 the local residential neighborhoods, why is that
21 ignored? Why is opposition of OSSA, Impact
22 Services, Harrowgate Civic Association,
23 Southport Association, Kensington Association,
24 the Parks Neighborhood Association and others
25 why is or was their opposition ignored, right?

1 It's like if you don't see people, you bound to
2 fail. If you don't listen to people -- because
3 institution or advice, that's not going to
4 change anything.

5 My last point is, the attorney said,
6 well, we got to do it by science. If it's left
7 to science, we're screwed.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Okay.

11 Our last panel -- any questions for the
12 panel? I know we are going to go back to Brian
13 and Tumar. I am going to allow the last panel
14 which is Ken Paul, Pete Smith, Leo Voloshia to
15 come forward. And then we are going to ask the
16 Managing Director's Office to come back and
17 close it out.

18 Then we are trying to honor the clock
19 and be out of here by eight o'clock.

20 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

21 MR. VOLOSHIA: My name is Leo Voloshia.
22 I'm a business owner in the area and resident
23 Voloshia is V-o-l-o-s-h-i-a.

24 So, I have been in Philadelphia since
25 2003. I moved here right after college. I

1 started a group of business in Old Kensington
2 and Cecil B. Moore. And Hancock, we renovated a
3 building there about 20,000 square feet. Our
4 offices is near an outdoor building. Our real
5 estate agent called and said, hey, you know
6 what, I got this great building in Kensington.
7 You want to check it out. I went and saw a
8 beautiful, old abandoned textile metal at Jasper
9 and Monmouth.

10 Over the last 3 years, we bought and
11 renovated and leased up that building at Jasper
12 and Monmouth. We have 52 new businesses in the
13 Kensington area. And while that's a huge
14 success, the fact is that the quality of life in
15 this neighborhood, I know I appreciate his
16 comment is not the right term. It's completely
17 abhorrent.

18 For years I drove through the tunnel
19 under Frankford Avenue. And every couple of
20 weeks, I would send the midnight email to Maria
21 and the Mayor saying, what's going on here? How
22 long is this going to take. And it went on, and
23 it went on and it went on. Finally, this year,
24 this issue was "addressed."

25 The result of the tunnels being moved --

1 and I'm only speaking of my company of where I
2 am. And I appreciate that it's happening
3 everywhere in the neighborhood. The result of
4 the encampment being moved to Ruth and Monmouth
5 Street. I want to share a little story about
6 what happened a couple of months ago.

7 A couple months ago, there was a
8 shooting, a homicide, in fact, going on in the
9 street at. A gentleman jumped -- who did the
10 shooting supposedly, jumped through an open
11 house through the back, dropped his weapon in
12 the rear yard, jumped the fence through our
13 parking lot and exited. My wife diligently
14 called the police department and, you know,
15 alerted them. They came and found the gentleman
16 who went and found the mand and we made a
17 statement.

18 The next day I said, we need to see this
19 through. And I called 311. And I said, hey,
20 there's an open property on Monmouth Street.
21 There was a murder, and the murder -- and the
22 shooter went through that property. Can you
23 please seal it up? Sure. I'm like, how long is
24 that going to take? I said, six weeks, that's
25 crazy. How come it's going to take six weeks?

1 There's a murder and the man went through the
2 house and dropped the gun. Why -- that's just
3 how long it takes.

4 I was like, okay, well, who can I call?
5 They said, call the 24th District, the Captain
6 of the 24th District. So okay, I call the
7 Captain of the 24th District. Said, sir, can
8 you help us seal this up. No. No. No. That's
9 up to 311. And I mean, that's unconscionable.
10 I want to talk about these kind of issues. It
11 has to be sped up.

12 While I appreciate Tumar and Brian
13 talking about these issues, it doesn't take --
14 it shouldn't take me calling Andre and Maria
15 who, by the way, got it sealed in 24 hours, to
16 make it happen.

17 Now, the shootings on that corner
18 continue at Ruth and Monmouth because everybody
19 from the tunnels moved to outside the prevention
20 point. If you drive by there at 11 p.m., I
21 encourage all of you to do that. Come back in
22 the neighborhood. Come by at 11:00 p.m. There
23 is 50 people shooting up, dealing drugs, et
24 cetera, et cetera.

25 Guess what happened earlier this week?

1 That same property, somebody went in there,
2 broke open the seal and started a fire. And
3 that house burned down. And now the two houses
4 right next door are completely ruined. I'm not
5 exactly sure whether they are vacant or
6 occupied. I assume at least one of them was
7 occupied. Those people do not have a home.
8 When is this going to stop?

9 You talk about closing opioid
10 encampments. It's not happening. How about the
11 guys who sit around the -- I can't follow Marnie
12 and Shannon's. I mean, wow, what great people
13 who come here every -- this maybe one of my
14 first or second meetings. But there is guys
15 that on Jasper sit under a tent every day, ten
16 of them selling drugs. What the hell? Why are
17 they sitting under the tent? I don't know how
18 this works? But somehow that has to stop. It's
19 completely unconscionable.

20 I think that 311 systems needs to
21 improve. And I think that the simple
22 policing -- it's not simple. I understand you
23 have to prove it. And I don't -- I can't speak
24 to what the DA is doing. It's not working.
25 Whatever is happening, it's not working and it

1 needs to change. We all know this.

2 So my question -- funny, it's been
3 testimony because I'm just wondering, what's
4 going to happen next? I don't know if it's on
5 City Council, but what's going to happen. I
6 didn't hear anything that's going to happen.
7 Somebody asked what are the three things a year
8 from now. I didn't hear anything that's going
9 to be different. I heard more of the same.

10 What's going to be different?

11 MR. PAUL: My name is Ken Paul, I'm
12 President of ProPac, also a director member of
13 Impact Community Development Corporation. And
14 what I am about to read is testimony. And it's
15 a combination of all the civic citizens on this
16 board. So, I am speaking on behalf of everybody
17 that is dealing with the issues in this group.

18 (Reads)

19 Once again, good evening City Council
20 members and fellow members and leaders. Thank
21 you for the opportunity to amplify a voice of
22 Philadelphia. For years, we have had exhaustive
23 discussion about homelessness, the opioid
24 crisis, trash in our streets and supervised
25 injections. We continue to work every day to

1 address those challenges. But what needs to be
2 heard today is that our City is losing control
3 to gun violence. This stems in part from open
4 narcotic trades and battles over the 125 corners
5 in the 24th District.

6 A couple of weeks ago, a pregnant
7 teenager was shot by crossfire on Emerald Street
8 when 30 bullets flew on the same corner for the
9 same reason. It's unheard of. Thirty bullets.
10 As of June 20, there had only been 20 days --
11 and I will repeat -- only 20 days in 2019 in
12 Philadelphia when someone wasn't shot. Wasn't.
13 That stat is absurd. The impact of these events
14 doesn't end with the violent killing. The
15 ongoing negative effects of this trauma is real
16 and known.

17 At this point, it is well known that
18 Philadelphians and the communities exposed to
19 high rates of violence and trauma die nearly 20
20 years earlier than those in affluent
21 neighborhoods. This exposure to gun violence
22 makes it nearly impossible for our children to
23 feel safe when they step outside. We are
24 setting our kids up to have a greater chance of
25 anxiety, depression, suicidality, health

1 problems and future financial challenges. There
2 is a direct line between exposure of violence
3 and success in life. We all know this. But as
4 a City, we can't seem to get control.

5 This deadly tide is rising. To stem the
6 tide of violence, we will partner with you as we
7 always have. We believe that the City of
8 Philadelphia needs to take immediate steps that
9 include the following. Adding a fourth police
10 service area to the 24th District. A more
11 focused geography will allow a target response
12 and will allow closer relationships with
13 neighbors who support law enforcement.

14 Disrupting open air drug lines. We all
15 know the corners where the drug users amass on a
16 daily basis as we stated continuously today. We
17 all watch them. We experience it every single
18 day. Ramping up residential camera programs.
19 Cameras on businesses are a great start, but
20 many of us are ready for cameras on our homes,
21 but we don't have the means to purchase them.

22 Increasing the pinpoint strategy.
23 Evidently, this has been effective, to let's
24 move it forward. Learning from other cities in
25 the past what has worked elsewhere, and how do

1 we bring other strategies to Philadelphia.
2 Getting every one in City government aligned
3 when it comes to enforcement. We hear different
4 stories from police, the District Attorney's
5 Office, the Managing Director's Office and the
6 Mayor's Office. Please be transparent and tell
7 us what will and will not happen. You may not
8 be willing to arrest your way out of the
9 problem, but the drug dealers can't be allowed
10 to sell fentanyl, help them inject it on the
11 sidewalk, and then shoot dealers who try to take
12 over their corner.

13 Please bring urgency to your response.
14 We need safety for kids and families.

15 Thank you.
16 (Applause.)

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Councilmembers.
18 Thank you for the opportunity. And thank you to
19 all the residents who came out tonight to voice
20 their concerns. My name is Pete Smith. And in
21 full transparency, I am a Republican candidate
22 for the Sixth District City Council.

23 However, I come to you tonight as a
24 concerned citizen of Philadelphia. In the past
25 two years, I have buried two of my cousins to

1 overdose deaths. I'm also the grandfather of a
2 young boy who stood there why we buried his
3 mother to an overdose death. The reason I stood
4 next to my grandson is because my son, his
5 father, has been somewhere out in Kensington for
6 the last few years addicted to heroin.

7 So as a concerned citizen of this great
8 City of Philadelphia, I come here tonight to ask
9 you, the City Administration, why do we allow
10 our children to stay high? I've been asking
11 this question for numerous times over the last
12 few weeks and want to know why the CBH will not
13 allow detox for opioid users. Medically --
14 medically assisted treatment programs cannot be
15 successful without proper detoxification so
16 users can clear their body and their mind.
17 Keeping people on Methadone and Suboxone is not
18 helpful. It only pacifies their craving. And
19 once a dose is missed, they fall back into
20 heroin use.

21 This, quite honestly, will make them
22 come back day after day to get medication. And
23 whatever reason they forget, they wind up
24 getting that craving back. And since heroin is
25 only \$5, it's easy to obtain that.

1 Our City is in the middle of a
2 devastating war against drugs where thousands of
3 our citizens are dying each year, and yet our
4 City does nothing to combat this crisis and does
5 everything to enable it and keep our children
6 high. And now we are talking about overdose --
7 overdose protection sites. It's even worse
8 about this as the state has lowered the
9 regulations and lowered the barriers so that
10 people can seek treatment much easier. Users
11 can now obtain treatment without ID, without
12 coverage. There is no 30-day restrictions that
13 if you drop out, you have to wait 30 days to
14 come back, and there is zero costs. However in
15 Philadelphia, we push our kids back onto the
16 street, we make their time in rehab when they go
17 there harder by silly regulations of no smoking.

18 In addition, another barrier was removed
19 from those rehab services, is that they no
20 longer need preapproved authorization from the
21 CBH to enter rehab. Yet, they removed this
22 barrier and are now recruiting these users for
23 detox, which presents facilities from ethically
24 admitting patients to rehab without
25 detoxification services. The CBH allows

1 detoxification for alcohol and Benzo users, but
2 not for opioid users. Why? As a citizen, I can
3 no longer tolerate this. Our loved ones need
4 our help. We need to stop putting them on a
5 30-day carousel with no end in sight. We need a
6 comprehensive plan that will focus on long-term
7 solution in reveal harsher penalties for
8 dealers, user intervention that which might
9 include a medical 302 for people who overdose.

10 They need detoxification. They need
11 real rehabilitation with a focus n mental health
12 and therapy, not only for the users but for
13 their families especially the children who are
14 affected by this. We then need to help these
15 people reenter society and the workforce by
16 getting them the tools to be successful. This
17 is a long term battle that requires your action.

18 Councilwoman Sanchez, you said earlier
19 that City Council had lost the trust of the
20 residents. I'm going to ask you and Councilman
21 Squilla to enact legislation banning the opening
22 of so-called injection sites. Councilman Green,
23 Johnson, Oh, Taubenberger and O'Neill as well as
24 Councilwoman Bass and Parker have all stated
25 that you are against safe injection sites. That

1 is nine votes. That can be passed in
2 legislation tomorrow. So in the spirit of
3 banning plastic bags, food trucks, bay windows
4 and hookah lounges, I'm asking for you step up
5 as leaders and stop this safe injection sites
6 amended; otherwise, I will start it in January.

7 (Applause.)

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you all for
9 your comments. I thank everybody for coming out
10 and testifying. I think it's important to know
11 that safe injections sites are already illegal.
12 They're not allowed to open safe injection site
13 in the City of Philadelphia.

14 MR. SMITH: Why can't City Council state
15 that?

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I think that's
17 pretty clear from the Attorney General, the U.S.
18 attorney, that it is illegal. I mean, redundant
19 for City Council to do a resolution saying --

20 MR. SMITH: In all due respect, aren't
21 sanctuary cities illegal?

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: No.

23 MR. SMITH: Well, our Mayor Jim Kenney
24 before he does an executive order allowing
25 self-injection sites, I think it's only fair

1 that those Councilpersons who are against safe
2 injection sites come up with a resolution so
3 that they are not open. You guys came up with a
4 resolution to honor Mayor Kenney when he did an
5 executive order for sanctuary cities. Let's not
6 give him the opportunity. You want to trust of
7 the people back, you have to give them what they
8 want.

9 We need to address the opioid crisis in
10 a lot of different ways. We need to stop
11 enabling and we need to start treating. And
12 needs to be a long term solution.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I think here is
14 that City Council, we have agreed with you and
15 we need to work together. We do have some
16 differences. You heard some of the testimony
17 today. We still need to work together to end
18 this blight in the community. This is an
19 epidemic that we have never seen as a city or a
20 country. A lot of times people react to
21 something knowing what they did before to do it.

22 We are now learning a process to come up
23 with new ways to try to attack this epidemic in
24 a way that will work not on the for the people
25 who are addicted, but hopefully save your son

1 and many others out there, but also to help the
2 communities that are inundated and having the
3 negative impact of them being on street of the
4 City of Philadelphia.

5 If we had a solution to say you do this
6 and that's the answer, whether it was a safe
7 injection site if that for some reason it was
8 able to be redone in the City of Philadelphia.
9 That does not solve this opioid epidemic
10 problem. And arresting everybody in the street
11 doesn't solve this opioid problem. So, we have
12 to be somewhere in between in order to make that
13 work. I think we are challenged to put certain
14 things in place to make that happen.

15 We have made some strides. We have done
16 some things. I know it's not fast enough or
17 good enough. We did have encampments under the
18 tunnels and other things that are no longer
19 there, which is a major accomplishment. We have
20 the Resilience Project. Is that enough? No.
21 Do we need to do work? Yes. We still learn
22 from you and others and other ideas of how to do
23 things that help the situation.

24 And like the Managing Director said, if
25 we try something that doesn't work, all right.

1 Scrap it and try something else. Because this
2 is happening in other places. And if we had
3 something that we could model this off of to
4 resolve it, we would do that. But we will keep
5 trying and we want the community input.

6 This is frustrating for everybody.
7 Nobody going to this meeting -- we are sick and
8 tired of seeing this going down and have to
9 answer every one of you knowing that I'm sick
10 and tired, too. So, we need more input and
11 everybody's input here knowing that we need to
12 do more.

13 And if you vote this election, you vote
14 us against if we are not doing what you want.
15 And then get somebody in here who is really
16 doing what you want. That is why the election
17 process is here. We will see that in November.
18 We will see that in the next four years and we
19 will see in the future.

20 MR. SMITH: And you and I will have a
21 discussion in January.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. That's
23 great.

24 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank
25 you. Thank you. We are going to ask Brian

1 Abernathy and Tumar and his office to come back.
2 If we can have someone from the Department of
3 Behavioral Health to respond to the two
4 questions talking about barriers to treatment to
5 this detox issue and smoking issue.

6 (Panel approaches Witness Table.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: I think
8 all of us know that when we started this
9 conversation, some of us for the last four or
10 five years, the fight was about barriers to
11 treatment has made tremendous strides. I want
12 to really just happy in answer around
13 detoxification, but also the issue of cigarette
14 ban. I had the conversation with David Jones.
15 We -- the discussion that we are doing this
16 because we are part of the research that is
17 being conducted about the effectiveness of this
18 methodology.

19 And so, I wanted a response to, if in
20 fact, we have gotten tobacco money, research
21 money related to this policy decision.

22 DR. NEIMARK: My name is Geoffrey
23 Neimark. I am the Chief Medical Officer for
24 Community Behavioral Health. Thank you for
25 allowing me to speak this evening.

1 I wanted to emphasize that access to
2 treatment is paramount in the eyes of CBH and
3 the Department. And to that end, I think we are
4 pleased to report that more individuals have
5 access to residential treatment in the past
6 eleven months than at any time in our history.
7 That's come about because of a number of
8 interventions we have undertaken.

9 We have removed prior authorization. We
10 have removed the requirements on identification.
11 We have done away with some of the requirements
12 around vital signs and drug screening mandates.
13 We also, though, have prioritized the access
14 needs to be to treatment that works and that has
15 impact. Let me get to the question.

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Doesn't work when
17 people don't go in or people leave.

18 DR. NEIMARK: Please remember to go
19 on -- there is no CBH policy prohibiting
20 overdose users from accessing detoxification. I
21 will say and go on the record that
22 detoxification alone for opioid disorder is a
23 poor treatment. People who undergo there are
24 guaranteed to relapse within 12 months. Beyond
25 that, it actually carries an increased mortality

1 risk. So, it is not a value-based treatment in
2 terms of clinical outcomes. And in terms of
3 stewardship and financial fund, which we take
4 very seriously, it's not the best. Despite
5 that, it's a state honored service. We cover it
6 and prove it. We can furnish numbers on how
7 many folks are accessing it.

8 In terms of the impact, I want to jump
9 into the smoking question. We have spoken a lot
10 today about the opioid epidemic. There is also
11 a tobacco epidemic in America. 500,000
12 Americans die each year because of tobacco.
13 Just for some perspective, that's ten times the
14 number of opioid users. In Philadelphia, every
15 year that's 4,000 people. That's ten people
16 every single day. It disproportionately kills
17 the poor, minorities and those with behavioral
18 health conditions smoking at a rate of three
19 times the general population, and loses on
20 average of 25 years of life.

21 This epidemic has been going on for
22 decades. Unfortunately, we have become immune
23 to tobacco use extremely. It's have been
24 neglected in drug and alcohol treatment settings
25 largely as an outgrowth of tobacco, which we

1 support to normalize. Yet, there is ample
2 evidence that there are evidence-based
3 treatments that work. That putting smoking
4 concurrently with other substance abuse disorder
5 reduces risk of relapse. And the data shows
6 that most people want to quit.

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: The data is flawed
8 with that.

9 DR. NEIMARK: With that said, I say
10 there is undue amount of attention made to the
11 concept of the ban. It's been a two-year
12 process that we have worked closely with folks
13 from New York who have implemented the citywide
14 ban there, with folks from the University of
15 Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Department of
16 Public Health to help educate our provider
17 network to help change the culture and to help
18 inform them on treatments that run for nicotine.

19 Smoke free, honestly, is aligned with
20 what's happening on the physical outside. If
21 you go to any general hospital, they are all
22 tobacco free. We know that outcomes are
23 positive. If you look at the data from New
24 York, even if you look at New Jersey, there are
25 no problems with accessing treatment or AMAs.

1 This smoke-free policy aligns with what we do
2 with our substances.

3 For instance, there is no rum that is
4 prescribed in any patient unit where it's not
5 allowed. We don't talk about the alcohol ban.

6 This policy has the substance to impact
7 the largest substance abuse in Philadelphia.
8 We've been asked about the timeliness of why
9 now. I would take the position that there is
10 never a bad time to prioritize this.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: There is --

12 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Folks,
13 folks. So, can you answer the question about
14 are we conducting research, and do we get
15 funding to do it at this time?

16 I just want to ask you to address this
17 stuff.

18 DR. NEIMARK: CBH is not conducting --

19 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: The
20 Health Department, the City. Anybody in the
21 City receive tobacco money putting limitations?
22 Is process going to be researched?

23 DR. NEIMARK: The only research
24 possible, the only amount of funding I'm aware
25 of is that grant for approximately \$50,000 we

1 will receive from CVS around smoking initiatives
2 two years ago.

3 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Okay.
4 So, I just want to respond to all of these
5 allegations about. There is a study. We need a
6 direct response or something in writing, if you
7 have tobacco money to implement this policy if
8 there is going to be a study conducted around
9 this? We need transparency.

10 DR. NEIMARK: Absolutely. We will
11 confirm.

12 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: So,
13 Councilman Domb had a question for Brian, and
14 then we are going to let people make closing
15 statements.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank everybody for
17 coming out. This is not really -- more of a
18 statement to Brian than a question for Tumar
19 also. You probably know what I'm going to say.

20 But been listening to all these issues.
21 I traveled through this area several times. I
22 was actually through here Monday night where
23 someone came running right in front of my car,
24 and I am almost hit the person it was so bad.
25 That person is out of it.

1 So, I'm listening to everybody. And I'm
2 saying to myself, we are going to be in here two
3 years and it's not going to be that much
4 different. We need to do something that's
5 drastically different. And as Councilman
6 Squilla said, if it doesn't work, try something
7 else. We need to do something drastically
8 different than what we have done. So, I said
9 this in the Council. I'm hearing everything.
10 I'm looking at maps that we have been provided.

11 And I'm saying to myself, we as a City
12 should fund, pay for a special services district
13 in this neighborhood that does cleaning, that
14 does more community service, that provides
15 security, that does all of the services that
16 they deserve. And if it costs us 50 people -- I
17 did the math very quickly -- 50 people per
18 shift, three shifts a day, seven days a week,
19 it's about seven and a half million dollars.
20 Might sound like a lot of money. But in the
21 scope of our budget, it's not.

22 I'm just asking, can we at least look at
23 this. As long as a solution -- it's not a total
24 solution, but it would -- if I walk out of a row
25 home in my neighborhood and I saw needles on the

1 ground, I would be flipping out. At least if we
2 had cleaner, safer neighborhood, we can maybe
3 then deal with the bigger issues. We can hire
4 ready, willing and able people that are on drugs
5 to go off drug and go into the workforce. We
6 can hire 150/200 people even in the neighborhood
7 to do this kind of work. Just something that
8 maybe we should look at.

9 If it's a money issue, I can't speak for
10 everybody. I would approve it. This is worth
11 it.

12 MR. ABERNATHY: Thank you, Councilman.
13 We are actually doing some of that work now. We
14 are paying people to pick up needles. Those
15 people are in time current users. And we are
16 working very clearly in that service. And we
17 are working on expanding those programs, as
18 well. Want to test and see if they work. They
19 are working and we are happy to expand. I think
20 part of this is police strategy.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is it possible for you
22 to come back to us with a written proposal to
23 provide special services district for the areas
24 that have been effected?

25 MR. ABERNATHY: I think we can come back

1 with a plan of sustainability to submit to
2 special services district. I understand the
3 concept very well. I worked within all of those
4 all over the City. And I think it was done in
5 reorganization -- our current organization to do
6 the same services. So, I think that's an
7 ongoing conversation.

8 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: I just
9 want to add that, you know, we -- within the
10 money we got from service providers, I think
11 there is commitment here. I agree with Brian.
12 If anything, we learned in this process is we
13 have engaged people to impact out to Kensington
14 CDC. We have a commercial contract that we give
15 them the same, even though we recognize that
16 there is so much work to be done.

17 We have been pushing SEPTA to help us
18 with the cleaning. They used 30,000 of their
19 customers at there and Allegheny to be more
20 active. So, we have folks on the ground. And
21 we have asked to do a whole lot with a little.
22 But we need to come back and provide them with
23 more resources to do the more sustainable work
24 going forward. I've been really adamant in the
25 Administration about that. Let's not come in.

1 And I have insisted -- we have asked
2 community to be volunteers. We have asked
3 parents to be volunteers. We need to pay some
4 of these folks because it's like we ask the
5 poorest people to be the volunteers. Everybody
6 is getting paid. All of us are getting paid
7 except the people on the ground. But I think,
8 again, we have to see -- Councilman Squilla and
9 I remind folks, we need to ensure people that we
10 are going to be destructive in the behavior and
11 we are going to respect them in the process. We
12 need to demonstrate through in our actions and
13 our resources.

14 Brian, I want you to give closing
15 remarks. And then I will ask my colleagues for
16 closing remarks. Really thank all of you for
17 coming out this evening.

18 MR. ABERNATHY: I just thank you. I
19 want to thank everyone. I understand the
20 frustration. I don't live here every day.
21 That's not fair. These are issues that I care
22 deeply about that I am going continue to invest
23 in, and continue to see my face, frankly,
24 whether you want to or not.

25 I want to resolve these issues. I want

1 these streets to be safe to walk down. I want
2 our kids to feel safe going to school. I want
3 Kensington Avenue to be a flourishing business
4 corridor. I want the vacant houses to not be
5 boarded up, to be lived in for affordable
6 housing program.

7 That's our commitment. That's been the
8 commitment of this Administration not just in
9 Kensington but some of our hardest hit
10 communities who, frankly, we have ignored for
11 far too long. That's what we are going to do.
12 And I will be here as long as you'll let me be
13 here.

14 This isn't acceptable. I don't think
15 I've ever said we are doing just fine. We are
16 not. And we are going to continue to work and
17 do things differently. I know it's never going
18 to be fast enough. But I expect to be in this
19 forum for the rest of the time. I think Tumar
20 has the same thing, and all of our staff is the
21 same thing. They know this is not just
22 commitment of me or just of my deputies or
23 commissioners. This is commitment of the Mayor.

24 And we are here.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Brian

1 and Tumar and Joanne and the whole team for
2 folks to come out here. I mean, again, you are
3 right. It's not enough. There is more to do.
4 But when we started this, it was -- I was
5 cautiously optimistic there would be some
6 benefit.

7 I have seen some benefits. Some things
8 have changed in a positive way even though we
9 have a long way to go and still increase in drug
10 activity out there and user activity. And the
11 neighbors are putting up with the same type of
12 thing they've been putting up with before. I
13 think as a whole, we still have to work together
14 as a team whether it's police, District
15 Attorneys, Directors Office, Council President.
16 And we have to make sure we are on the same
17 imagine.

18 The other thing is, we have to have
19 policies in place that everybody understands,
20 community understands what they are, police
21 understand what they are, Council understands
22 what they are. And you know where I'm going
23 with this. Try to make policy for a long period
24 of time. And that needs to be happen hopefully
25 by the end of the year, something that everybody

1 knows exactly what the rules and rules are, so
2 that we can hold each other accountable. And
3 that then if we are not doing, we know exactly
4 who is not doing it. Right now, it's easy for
5 us to point fingers at everybody else because we
6 are not all on the same page yet.

7 Hopefully over the summer, before fall
8 comes, we all get there and are doing the same
9 thing. Therefore, the finger pointing stops.
10 But the resilience and the positive outcomes are
11 starting to be more noticed. Not that they are
12 not noticed now, but they are still -- that
13 faith and the frustration we hear from the
14 community, that we hear and we know. We know
15 you guys are going through it, too, day in and
16 day out because we get tired of hearing it,
17 also.

18 And there has been, you know, times
19 where we will disagree on things. And you know,
20 that will be public and different directions.
21 But I do appreciate these meetings because it is
22 time for people to hear some of the other things
23 they may not know is going on. But also gives
24 us a chance to hear the frustration that is out
25 there, including what they are really doing day

1 in and day out. And so, thank for your time and
2 efforts. Appreciate it.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I want to join
4 my colleagues in thanking everyone for being
5 here this evening. It was a very important
6 discussion. I want to particularly thank the
7 community because the rest of us primarily are
8 public servants. We serve the community.
9 That's what we are paid to do. And so, it's
10 important that we step up in a major way and
11 hear you when you speak about your concerns.

12 Because for so many people in the City,
13 we have so many folks who are related or close
14 to property line or just barely hanging on,
15 folks who are really struggling no matter where
16 they are. For all of those folks, they
17 desperately need government to work for them.
18 And when it does not work, the effects can be
19 devastating.

20 And so, I just want you to know we hear
21 you. I believe that we all hear you. And I
22 want to thank you for coming out for sharing
23 your input. And we are going to continue to
24 work. We are going to continue to have these
25 conversations, these hearing. I want to thank

1 my colleagues, especially Councilwoman Maria
2 Quinones-Sanchez for being so dogged on this
3 issue. For really making sure it's at the
4 forefront of what we talk about in terms of
5 addressing issues with the City of Philadelphia.

6 Again, thanks to everyone who showed up
7 tonight. Thank you, Councilwoman.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I just want to echo
10 the Chair. This has been an issue that they
11 have been working on for a long time. And a
12 number of people feel the frustration. And the
13 question I have is mainly question I asked for
14 the Administration to make sure that although we
15 have this frustration, that going forward,
16 making incremental progress to that day as
17 Marnie said when we come back 45 days, 90 days,
18 a year from now, we are not seeing the same
19 issues.

20 I believe a lot of conversation, a lot
21 of good work is like pushing a bolder up a hill.
22 But we have got to make some progress. My
23 question to the Administration, what are your
24 next steps?

25 MR. ABERNATHY: Councilwoman asked for

1 something in writing. Certainly, by the end of
2 July, we will have something in writing to
3 Council that will show the community as well
4 around sustainability, volunteers. And because
5 you are right, we can't ask these people to
6 continue to volunteer and public safety.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you very much.

8 With those remarks, we are concluding
9 our hearing, the Public Hearing from the
10 Committee on Public Health and Human Services.
11 And hold this meeting in recess to the call of
12 the Chair.

13 Thank you much to everyone
14 participating.

15 (At this time, the Public Hearing
16 adjourned at 7:56 p.m.)

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

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

ANGELA M. KING, RPR,
Court Reporter, Notary Public

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