

PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY MEETING

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Minutes taken at the PHILADELPHIA HOUSING
AUTHORITY QUEEN LANE REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY MEETING,
taken at the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, 5333 Pulaski
Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19144, on
Thursday, July 12, 2012, beginning at approximately
6:20 p.m., before Michele Matteo, RPR, CCR, License
Number 30X100171200.

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Michael Johns

Rylanda Wilson

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MR. JOHNS: As always, before we get started. I'm going to ask Pastor Hasty to come up and give us some words of wisdom and prayer.

PASTOR HASTY: Good evening, again. Welcome everyone this warm summer's eve.

We do apologize for our tardiness, but I'm grateful that you waited. That young lady in the rear, she's the reason why we're a little tardy. But it was well worth it for me.

Gracious Father, we come now at this time. Thank you for this day, another day which we've never seen. Thank you for allowing the community members, the various organizations, to come out and to be a part of this information session. The Housing Authority continues to inform us about this process. Just bless us, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE AUDIENCE: Amen.

1 MR. JOHNS: Thank you.

2 Before we get started, there are
3 a few things that occurred with the
4 Housing Authority in the past couple
5 weeks that we probably need to just
6 address real briefly.

7 There have been a few changes at
8 the head of the administration. We have
9 a new interim executive director, Kelvin
10 Jeremiah, who has taken over the reins
11 of the Housing Authority. Two high
12 level staff members are no longer with
13 the agency. I have been asked to act in
14 the capacity of deputy executive
15 director for operations, but I will
16 continue to be a part of this process
17 all the way through. I started and will
18 continue with you all the way through
19 this process. I committed to this
20 community and seeing this project move
21 forward in a positive way.

22 As I moved into this acting
23 capacity, Kyle Flood, who has been
24 working with me for the past several

1 years, has now moved into an acting
2 capacity into my oval. So you're
3 probably going to see just as much of
4 him as you have seen of me in the past.
5 Again, I'll continue to be a part of the
6 process. And Kyle is a licensed
7 planner, as I am a licensed architect,
8 and committed to making neighborhoods
9 sustainable for the long run. So we
10 look forward to working with you
11 throughout this development activity.

12 Right now I'm going to ask
13 Rylanda to come up and give us a recap
14 of some of the many meetings that we've
15 had here at this church.

16 MS. WILSON: Thank you, Michael.

17 We've talked about how the
18 Housing Authority has had to weather the
19 economic downturn, the bursting of the
20 bubble in the housing market, how it's a
21 very tough housing market, how there's a
22 desperate need for affordable housing in
23 Philadelphia, how PHA has a history of
24 transporting blighted communities, how

1 crime in these communities, once they
2 are rehabilitated, is on the decline,
3 and in some communities it wipes out
4 crime completely, how PHA is about the
5 business of building houses and in doing
6 so creating jobs in Philadelphia. We
7 talked about the tax credit process,
8 what tax credits are, how we apply for
9 them, what -- how we apply for them, how
10 we select projects that are going to be
11 foreclosed for tax credit funding at the
12 state level. We've talked about the
13 proposed schedule for all the activities
14 related to the Queen Lane project and
15 itemized what those activities are in
16 that discussion.

17 We've talked about Section 3 job
18 opportunities, business opportunities,
19 as well as community and supportive
20 services that are an integral part of
21 what PHA does. We're not just about the
22 building. We're about the people that
23 occupy those buildings, helping people
24 who may not have had resources before to

1 secure the resources they need to be
2 economically self-sufficient.

3 We had a charrette and got a lot
4 of wonderful input on the development of
5 the site across the street. And we --
6 some of that work caused PHA to change
7 the plan -- the original plan for the
8 site, such that we are committed to no
9 longer building on the Potter's Field
10 and that the site itself, in fact,
11 allows for us to build the 51 units
12 without building on the Potter's Field.
13 55 units, I'm sorry. I stand corrected.
14 55 units.

15 We talked about implosion. We
16 had our implosion contractors come and
17 describe their decades of history and
18 expertise in the implosion process and
19 what that means for the towers
20 themselves and the surrounding
21 community.

22 We've had our archeologist here
23 to explain that intricate process,
24 time-consuming process of doing the

1 archeological finding on the site.

2 We've also talked about -- we've
3 had a couple of meetings about the
4 historic review process, the Section 106
5 historic review process. Thank you.

6 MR. JOHNS: And on that note, I'm
7 going to ask Mary -- is it Tisdale?

8 MS. TINSMAN: Tinsman.

9 MR. JOHNS: -- (continuing) who
10 is from our archeological firm, to give
11 us an update. We weren't going to have
12 a meeting this month. For the folks
13 that were here last month, I said we
14 probably would not have a meeting this
15 month, because I didn't think there
16 would be anything to talk about, but in
17 addition to some information that the --
18 that Mary will share with you about the
19 archeological review, we also have been
20 working diligently to move the project
21 along in hopes that everything goes well
22 through the 106 review process and we
23 are approved to be -- to have the
24 building demolished.

1 We have that new information for
2 you. Mary.

3 MS. TINSMAN: Thanks. I have to
4 preface what I'm going to say by making
5 sure everyone understands that this is
6 not an official Section 106 consulting
7 party meeting. Those meetings are the
8 ones that HUD calls for and holds. And
9 I have been told that they will have
10 another official consulting party
11 meeting before the end of August. If
12 you have any questions I have the
13 gentleman's name and phone number, and
14 I'm happy to give that to you.

15 Keep that the mind, this is not a
16 Section 106 meeting, so I can't answer
17 some of the questions that you're going
18 to have about that process. I can tell
19 you in part, because I've seen people
20 like Lisa carrying it around, that we
21 did complete the ground penetrating
22 radar survey. We talked about that in
23 the spring. We did submit our report to
24 PHA and to HUD, and HUD has forwarded

1 that to the Pennsylvania Historical
2 Museum Commission. As of yesterday
3 afternoon we got no response from the
4 PHMC yet, but I did send another request
5 in to get an answer, and I think that's
6 what HUD is kind of waiting for, to have
7 that next consulting party meeting,
8 bring everybody together at once and
9 talk about that together. So I don't
10 have a definitive response to that
11 report for any of you tonight.

12 That's kind of where we're at.
13 We're really still where we were. We're
14 waiting for the PHMC to make their
15 determination and for HUD to make their
16 final determination on how we're going
17 to proceed with the archeology and where
18 we're going to go from here.

19 MR. JOHNS: The -- we're going to
20 take questions after this next segment.

21 You probably can't see that
22 because of the light, but as I stated,
23 although we are moving forward through
24 the 106 review process, and we have not

1 received an official approval from HUD
2 for the approvals for the demolition of
3 the high-rise, we -- I have been working
4 diligently forward on creating the site
5 plan for zoning to submit for zoning and
6 to move through the various regulatory
7 processes that we have to move through
8 through the City and State to develop
9 the 55 units around the Potter's Field.

10 And so with that, I'm going to
11 ask Chris Panella, who is with the
12 architectural firm of Kise, Straw &
13 Kolodner to come up -- oh, I'm sorry,
14 Kitchen & Associates to come up and kind
15 of walk you through where we are with
16 the developmental plans and the site
17 plan for the developer. Chris.

18 MR. PANELLA: Thank you.

19 Welcome.

20 Like Mike, I'm going to also be
21 -- just like Mike, I'm going to take the
22 leadership role in this project, wherein
23 I'm going to be involved from the early
24 conception right to the end of

1 construction, so that as we work with
2 the construction manager and PHA on this
3 project, again with the community, we
4 developed the site plan here. Again we
5 apologize. It's difficult to see.
6 There is 55 units, and they border the
7 streets, and they respect the Potter's
8 Field by not offering any new
9 construction over that space. They
10 restored the city block in both the way
11 that the new buildings front the street,
12 and the overall scale is also compatible
13 with the existing homes that are here,
14 being only two stories and three stories
15 in height.

16 There's also a variety of units
17 where there are walk up apartments,
18 there are townhouse over flats, and
19 there are just stand alone flats. With
20 the exception of only the one bedroom
21 units, every unit has an individual
22 entrance, and that is really what -- an
23 important part of not only the Housing
24 Authority, but an important part of

1 making a place feel like home, that
2 everybody has their own door, their own
3 street number on the door, their own
4 mailbox, and that type of thing.

5 These are the conceptual
6 elevation. As far as the Pricilla
7 Street elevation, which are townhouses
8 that are individual townhouses, and each
9 one of these doors represents a
10 three-story townhouse. That's --
11 there's no mixed use from wall to wall
12 like existing townhouses. That's the
13 three story space. They blend a little
14 bit of traditional townhouse
15 architecture and a little bit of
16 contemporary design to kind of set a new
17 flavor, a new tone, and also be
18 compatible with the type of buildings
19 that the Housing Authority tends to
20 build. The Penn Street elevation is
21 probably the most sympathetic to the
22 existing architecture. It blends two
23 story and three story elevations. It
24 goes a long way to not make it look like

1 one large building, it's individual
2 buildings that look like they might have
3 been built through time. Varying group
4 lines and varying textures and colors
5 kind of give it that gentrified look
6 while still being -- having all the
7 qualities of new construction.

8 The key part of this -- again,
9 it's hard to see -- is in the center of
10 this block is located a community
11 building where PHA will have its
12 community space and rental offices. And
13 there's also a breezeway that will
14 connect Penn Street to the Potter's
15 Field for foot traffic only.

16 The Pulaski Avenue is townhouse
17 over flats. It has these exterior
18 stairs. I don't know if there's a lot
19 in here with the exterior stairs. A
20 couple places. These stairs will be
21 utilized by the two upper units, so
22 every one of these clusters you're
23 looking at three individual units. And,
24 again, a variety of textures, a variety

1 of finishes to kind of blend that
2 traditional and contemporary
3 architecture.

4 The individual floor plans are
5 here. There's, again, one bedroom
6 flats, two bedroom flats, three bedroom
7 flats. I have some exhibits here that
8 we can look at after the PowerPoint
9 presentation is over if you want to look
10 at those in more detail.

11 One thing to note about the floor
12 plans is there are funding requirements
13 with PHA and PHFA to make certain size
14 units. And the plans that are here
15 today are compliant with all those
16 funding requirements.

17 The other floor plan, these are
18 the Pulaski Street -- I'm sorry, the
19 Priscilla Street townhouses. Again,
20 that's one unit with three stories of
21 living, and these are the Pulaski Street
22 units with the two townhouses over the
23 flat.

24 Are there any other questions?

1 MR. JOHNS: Before we take
2 questions, I just want to acknowledge
3 councilwoman Cindy Bass. If you would
4 like to come up.

5 MS. BASS: Sure. Good evening,
6 everybody. It's a pleasure to be here.
7 I'm here just like you all are. I want
8 to find out exactly what's going on.
9 And we did have the opportunity to hear
10 from Mr. Johns in our office a couple of
11 days ago, and we appreciate, you know,
12 PHA and everybody providing briefings to
13 the council office and just wanted to
14 come out and join you here tonight and
15 hear what the community has to say, what
16 their thoughts are, what your concerns
17 are. And so we're just looking forward
18 to being a partner in what's going to
19 happen. I'm very excited about it. I
20 think this is something that's going to
21 be fantastic for the community. I know
22 that I've had different discussions
23 about recreation with different folks
24 from the community, and we're looking

1 into all the recreation options as well
2 in terms of what can we do to make sure
3 that we have a -- a recreation space
4 that does justice to the neighborhood.
5 I don't believe Wissahickon playground
6 -- I think it served its purpose for a
7 long time, but I don't think it was that
8 much of a quality facility that we
9 deserve in the community. So I'm
10 committed to making sure that we have
11 that in the neighborhood and I look
12 forward to working with PHA to assure we
13 have quality housing as well.

14 So I'd be happy to take any
15 questions at the end as well, and thank
16 you so much for having me.

17 MR. JOHNS: So that's -- that's
18 our brief presentation. There wasn't a
19 whole lot that I guess the archeologist
20 can really tell us, because of the 106
21 review process, and we don't want to
22 circumvent that.

23 So as I said, we've been working
24 diligently to develop the plans to move

1 forward to zoning and -- in anticipation
2 of having the approvals -- the
3 appropriate approvals from HUD to
4 demolish the building.

5 And so our goal is to try to
6 begin to make up some of the time that
7 we've lost through this entire process,
8 and I think Tom, who is our senior
9 development manager for PHA, says we're
10 almost a year behind in terms of where
11 we had hoped to be, you know, now. We
12 had hoped that the building would be
13 done. We started moving the process
14 along and started construction. But,
15 you know, we've got a -- we've got to
16 work through those processes that HUD
17 has, and we want to make sure that we
18 have in some -- in some way have
19 positively addressed the concerns of the
20 community moving forward.

21 So with that, if there are any
22 questions -- we do have the contracting
23 firm here, too, if there are any
24 questions with respect to the

1 construction and timelines. I can't
2 tell you a whole lot. So we'll take
3 questions.

4 If you can please state your name
5 for the record.

6 KATHERINE ADAMS: Good evening.
7 Katherine Adams. I live on West Wenonah
8 Street about three blocks from here one
9 direction.

10 My questions -- thank you for
11 showing the plan. It's nice to see what
12 you're envisioning. It's good to see
13 something positive happening.

14 I have two questions, one being
15 the stand alone houses at the end, where
16 is the entrance? Is it Queen Lane, or
17 is it on the side street?

18 MR. JOHNS: Queen Lane.

19 KATHERINE ADAMS: And then the
20 second question speaks to the building
21 materials. When you gave the
22 PowerPoint, you often spoke about all
23 these wonderful things that were
24 happening in the other facilities

1 showing green features -- I'm going to
2 use the green word, geothermal, solar,
3 leads, and I'd love to know what you're
4 planning to make sure that you're doing
5 the best you can, state of the art, not
6 based on, you know, five years ago, but
7 what's happening right now. What are
8 you going to promise?

9 MR. JOHNS: This is going to be a
10 lead facilities, a lead development.

11 KATHERINE ADAMS: What are you
12 going to bring in, geothermal --

13 MR. JOHNS: We're not doing
14 geothermal. Geothermal would be almost
15 impossible because of the Potter's
16 Field.

17 KATHERINE ADAMS: What about
18 solar?

19 MR. JOHNS: We haven't looked at
20 solar. That may be something that we
21 could consider as we move forward,
22 depending on what our funding is, but
23 we're definitely doing a lead
24 development, which will give us all the

1 energy efficiencies that are, you know,
2 the latest.

3 KATHERINE ADAMS: Do you know
4 what number or color? Is it gold
5 standard leads or --

6 MR. JOHNS: Silver. The last
7 development we did we actually got to
8 what --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Gold.

10 MR. JOHNS: We started at
11 certified, so we ended up at gold. So
12 we're hopeful we'll make it through the
13 same.

14 KATHERINE ADAMS: Thank you.

15 JOHN WATERFORD: John Waterford.
16 I'm curious in regards to the total
17 number of people who would be
18 potentially occupying this development.
19 Can anybody give me a ballpark?

20 MR. JOHNS: There are 55 units,
21 and you want to give me the unit -- how
22 many one bedroom, how many two bedroom?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Site plan.

24 MR. JOHNS: Let's see, we got --

1 I can't read that. It's like nine one
2 bedrooms, maybe 22 two bedrooms, 27
3 three bedrooms. 9, 22, 27.

4 So if you assume that the one
5 bedrooms will have one or two people,
6 the two bedrooms will probably have, you
7 know, a parent with a couple kids and so
8 on, there would probably be, I don't
9 know, a hundred or so people.

10 JOHN WATERFORD: A hundred and
11 so, okay. Let's do 130. Can we do 130?

12 MR. JOHNS: That's a possibility,
13 yes.

14 JOHN WATERFORD: How many parking
15 places?

16 MR. JOHNS: For on site, we have
17 currently -- let me go back to this.
18 For the current high-rise where we had
19 119 families, I think we had two, three
20 and some four bedrooms, I believe in
21 that high-rise we had 20 parking spaces.

22 CORLISS GRAY: No higher than
23 three.

24 MR. JOHNS: So it was one, two

1 and three bedrooms, 119 units. We had
2 20 parking spaces on site.

3 For this development with 55
4 units, we actually will have only seven.
5 Seven parking spaces, and I'll tell you
6 why. There is -- we made a
7 determination along with the planning
8 commission that there was adequate on
9 street parking around the perimeter of
10 the site. So the only -- the only
11 street where we are actually adding
12 parking -- additional parking is on
13 Priscilla, because Priscilla Street you
14 only can park on one side, as you know.
15 So we're going to be adding additional
16 parking spaces on our side of the street
17 and then on the other streets, Penn
18 Street, Pulaski and Queen Lane, since
19 parking is available on both sides of
20 the street, we're going to have on
21 street parking. That reduces a lot of
22 macadam, which goes to your question on
23 sustainability. So there would be
24 additional green space.

1 Because we are not building on
2 the Potter's Field, there is no way we
3 could have had parking in the rear.
4 There's no way we could have had
5 driveways. And so the idea to create
6 even a more sustainable development by
7 doing on street parking and not creating
8 additional impervious surfaces or
9 macadam in the back actually works
10 towards positive development.

11 JOHN WATERFORD: I appreciate
12 your answer and your candor, but I would
13 hope that you would revisit that
14 subject, because as me being a resident
15 of that area -- a direct resident of
16 that area, I can see it impacting me
17 severely.

18 MR. JOHNS: Thank you.

19 KIMBERLY MATHIS: Hi, my name is
20 Kimberly Mathis, and I'm a Habitat
21 homeowner as well as a Habitat board of
22 director.

23 I'm here today with Troy
24 Hahnemann, and Jon Musselman, and also

1 Mr. Moreni. My concern is being a
2 Habitat homeowner, I'm representing the
3 homeowners for that block. It is a
4 small block, okay. In terms of your
5 three story, as you call them,
6 elevations that are going to be put up,
7 how is that going to impact our block?
8 I have a special needs child, and in
9 terms of the construction that goes on
10 on the block, how close is it going to
11 be to our homeowners? Because it's such
12 a small block. We also share that block
13 with PHA homeowners as well.

14 MR. JOHNS: Right.

15 KIMBERLY MATHIS: So how would
16 that impact the block?

17 MR. JOHNS: There will be
18 adequate safety guards and fencing, et
19 cetera, put along our side of the block
20 so -- to insure that there's minimizing
21 any dust, minimizing any soot or any
22 wash onto the street. The site is
23 generally cleaned up every day. They
24 have to clean the site. So in terms of

1 the -- I don't think there will really
2 be a real big impact on that street.
3 I'm imagining that most of the activity
4 for construction will come through
5 another street and not Priscilla,
6 because it's so small.

7 KIMBERLY MATHIS: Okay, because
8 you know right now it's fenced off. So
9 would it be a working space in the
10 radius area where it's fenced off?

11 MR. JOHNS: Probably, yes.

12 KIMBERLY MATHIS: That was one of
13 my concerns with that. We still have to
14 get up and down the block with children
15 that are coming from school, from John
16 B. Kelly and other areas. They're
17 bussed in and bussed out. And I just
18 want to be -- insure that we will -- you
19 know, it's going to be a lot of
20 construction, a lot of dust, a lot is
21 going to be going on.

22 MR. JOHNS: We'll make sure that
23 we keep that block clean and make sure
24 that it's clear for the families.

1 KIMBERLY MATHIS: I also wanted
2 to add that these scattered sites are
3 beautiful. I came through the first
4 one, and to see the progress that's
5 going down and all the effort that's
6 involved, we as a community want to pray
7 and hope that this is successful.

8 MR. JOHNS: Thank you. Thank you
9 very much.

10 KIMBERLY MATHIS: Thank you so
11 much.

12 LISA HOPKINS: Good evening.
13 Lisa Hopkins from Northwest Neighbors of
14 Germantown.

15 I was real happy to have our
16 council person here this evening to
17 address the concerns with the community.

18 With the Section 106 process,
19 once that's completed, is that layout --
20 will that have any effect as to that
21 layout possibly being changed if there's
22 concerns with some parties on how large
23 the Potter's Field may extend? Will
24 that possibly -- the Section 106,

1 results, will that have an effect of
2 changing those plans?

3 MR. JOHNS: You can probably
4 answer that better than I. It depends
5 on when the ground penetrating radar --
6 we had to do the ground penetrating
7 radar to try to determine what the
8 actual boundaries were of the original
9 Potter's Field, and that information was
10 submitted to HUD, who then submitted
11 that information to the State Historic
12 Review Commission, who has to do a
13 determination or a review. So --

14 MS. TINSMAN: Sure. The results
15 of the ground penetrating radar -- and I
16 know you have copies, I saw you carrying
17 them around -- revealed that there are a
18 lot of what we're calling anomalies on
19 the site. There are historic buildings
20 on the opposite side of the areas from
21 the Potter's Field. And you can see
22 where the foundations were in those
23 areas. And then adjacent to the
24 Potter's Field, the scientist who did

1 the GPR surveys has three areas of
2 specific concern that he saw that he
3 felt needed to be investigated. Two of
4 them are areas that have a potential to
5 actually be burials. One is immediately
6 adjacent to where we've confirmed part
7 of the Potter's Field boundary. One is
8 a little bit removed from that. And
9 then he did identify a second larger
10 area on the side of the Potter's Field
11 that does have the potential to be an
12 extension of the Potter's Field.

13 Depending on -- and what we're waiting
14 for now is for the State Historic Review
15 Commission to come back and say we
16 received the GPR report, the ground
17 penetrating radar, we agree with the
18 conclusions, we agree with your proposed
19 strategy to test these anomalies, and
20 HUD will give the okay to continue with
21 the process or they will submit their
22 own methodology of how they want to
23 proceed with it.

24 The area that I think you would

1 be most concerned about is the larger
2 area that could be an extension of the
3 Potter's Field. And I can't speak for
4 PHA, but I would imagine if the boundary
5 was confirmed to be slightly larger,
6 that you would have to -- they would
7 have to reassess the plan.

8 That's the area you were talking
9 about?

10 LISA HOPKINS: Yes.

11 MR. JOHNS: I guess the good
12 thing is that sort of based on what the
13 archeologist found, we're still way
14 outside of the -- outside of those
15 anomalies where we're proposing to do
16 the buildings.

17 LISA HOPKINS: Is there a reason
18 why the trailer that was on the ground
19 near the basketball courts was removed?

20 JAY FERRARO: I'm Jay Ferraro
21 from Dale Corporation, the construction
22 manager for the project.

23 We removed the trailer from the
24 site because obviously the trailer

1 generates a cost, a monthly cost here,
2 and given the fact that there's been
3 delays because of the reviews that have
4 taken place, there was really no need to
5 have the -- those costs be incurred
6 against PHA's budget, so that that money
7 could be used at a later date for a
8 better purpose.

9 So that was the one and only
10 reason why we removed the trailer.

11 LISA HOPKINS: With the
12 architecture, the front of the houses,
13 what's going to be -- the area that's
14 facing Potter's Field, what are your
15 plans for that? Are they going to be
16 backyards? Are they going to be decks?

17 MR. JOHNS: They're actually
18 going to be the -- the units will have
19 decks, and we wanted to make sure that
20 the backs of the units really created a
21 real sense of place, because they will
22 overlook whatever's done on the Potter's
23 Field. And so we wanted to make sure
24 that when you look through the Potter's

1 Field, you don't feel as though you're
2 looking at the back of somebody's house.
3 So it will appear almost like a part of
4 the entire vernacular that will be built
5 around the park.

6 LISA HOPKINS: Will the public or
7 either of the consulting parties with
8 the right to know policy, will we get a
9 copy of the budget? Because you -- from
10 the last time it was reported to be a 20
11 million dollar project, but we need to
12 have that broken down, how much is
13 demolition, who is going to maintain the
14 Potter's Field.

15 MR. JOHNS: The Potter's Field --
16 anything related to the construction of
17 the townhomes, that information is
18 clearly available.

19 The Potter's Field comes out of
20 the 106 review process. We don't know
21 who is going to maintain the Potter's
22 Field. We don't know whether there's
23 going to be a monument on the Potter's
24 Field. That is part of the consulting

1 party's review.

2 LISA HOPKINS: Who is going to
3 maintain the green area? Once we're
4 finished the Section 106, everything is
5 built, who is going to cut the grass,
6 who is going to plant flowers?

7 MR. JOHNS: That comes out of the
8 106 review process.

9 LISA HOPKINS: You mean the
10 budget?

11 MR. JOHNS: No, that comes out of
12 -- whatever determination is made out of
13 that 106 review process in terms of what
14 happens on this site will also determine
15 who maintains the site, who plants the
16 -- what was done at the President's
17 House downtown, I think that was turned
18 over to the State -- the national parks.
19 So that may be a possibility here. I
20 have no idea. That comes out of that
21 process.

22 In terms of the space that's
23 around here that's not part of that,
24 that would be the responsibility of the

1 Housing Authority clearly.

2 LISA HOPKINS: All right. I have
3 my last comment. The community, because
4 they've been ringing my phone off the
5 hook and e-mailing me, we really, really
6 would like to see you working hand in
7 hand with the council person, state
8 representative to really restore this
9 area. The trash, an abundance of it,
10 that grassland -- and we still have to
11 live here. So I don't know if that was
12 taken care of, but we want to make sure
13 that you maintain the grass -- the grass
14 be cut, the trash -- there's been a lot
15 of trash on Queen Lane that's not being
16 maintained.

17 JAY FERRARO: I did a walk around
18 the site before the meeting, and we
19 agreed that the site could use more
20 maintenance and clean up better than it
21 is currently. I'm not happy with the
22 condition of it.

23 So tomorrow morning I'm going to
24 make sure that the forces are in sight

1 early next week to come back, do a full
2 clean up around the site, interior and
3 exterior around the block, and we'll
4 take care of some of the overgrowth that
5 has taken place especially in front of
6 the tower building. It seems like it's
7 been neglected too long.

8 LISA HOPKINS: I can ask a
9 question to Councilwoman Bass?

10 MR. JOHNS: Yes.

11 LISA HOPKINS: I just wanted you
12 to kind of address the community as far
13 as your plans of working with PHA for
14 the relocation of the Wissahickon
15 playground.

16 MS. BASS: Sure. I don't know
17 how much detail I want to go into,
18 because everything is tentative, but I
19 will say this, that we do have plans --
20 or we're working on a plan in terms of
21 replacing the Wissahickon playground.
22 And it would actually come in a couple
23 of different pieces. So it probably
24 would not be one full playground -- or

1 the size that you had at Wissahickon,
2 but there would be a number of
3 facilities -- or I shouldn't say
4 facilities. There can be indoor space
5 on some of the spaces, but the idea is
6 that there would be a place that would
7 be for tots, maybe a tot lot, also an
8 adult and a senior lot, because we want
9 to make sure that every recreational
10 facility that goes forward
11 has recreational facilities available
12 for seniors. It's a big thing that
13 they're doing in the north, and we're
14 going to bring that here to
15 Philadelphia. And also for adults. We
16 want it to be intergenerational.

17 And then we also recognize that
18 teens may have -- well, they do have
19 different needs in terms of their
20 recreation, what they want. So we're
21 working to make sure that we have a
22 space for them, whether it's basketball,
23 or baseball, or whatever it is that
24 they're interested in doing, that

1 there's a space that's available for
2 them.

3 So we're working on it. There's
4 no quick fix. It's not going to happen
5 overnight. It's probably going to take
6 us a year, maybe two years. We're going
7 to work on it and try to get it done as
8 quickly as possible, because I believe
9 we need an area for young people in
10 particular to go to keep them out of
11 trouble. You know, it keeps them into
12 positive activities. And that's what we
13 really want to see. It's a priority for
14 us. I'm a chair of the Parks and
15 Recreation Committee for City Council,
16 and so it's something that's very
17 important to me.

18 But also one other thing I just
19 want to address before I hand the mic
20 back over, which is if you see the trash
21 or construction debris or whatever it
22 is, feel free to call our office. We
23 will get it cleaned up. I work with PHA
24 and, you know, the streets department.

1 We'll get it cleaned up as quickly as
2 possible. So we don't have to wait for
3 a meeting. We can get it cleaned up
4 right away. The number is 215-686-3424,
5 or you can just call 311, and they'll
6 patch you through to our office. But we
7 want to know.

8 We're not running from the issues
9 in our community. We want to fix them.
10 So please just feel free to call our
11 office and let us know.

12 And even beyond that, thinking
13 long term about the parking situation
14 that this gentleman mentioned earlier,
15 you know, we -- we realize that, you
16 know, we're early in the process. We
17 don't know what all the effects are
18 going to be, but I think that it's
19 important to recognize that we're
20 willing to come back to the table and
21 try to figure some things out. So
22 that's something, you know -- if we're
23 having a problem with parking and maybe
24 if we have a lot of, you know,

1 nonresidents parking in the area, maybe
2 we need to get residential parking
3 permits, whatever it may be, we're
4 willing to work to find a solution. If
5 you do find there's a problem parking in
6 your neighborhood, we don't want you to
7 suffer in silence. If there is a
8 problem, let our office know. We want
9 to work on it.

10 Thank you so much.

11 MR. JOHNS: Thank you.

12 ELIZABETH NWIZUGBO: I live on
13 Queen Lane. This is my first meeting
14 here coming here.

15 So my question is when I hear
16 51 -- or 55 units, the first thing in my
17 mind is overcrowding. That's the first
18 thing. The second thing, without
19 parking, that to me is a problem, but we
20 have parking problems right now as we --
21 we're dealing with it right now, parking
22 problems.

23 And then the other thing is drug
24 free zone, big problem. It's not a drug

1 free zone. If you're going to come in
2 and do that -- I think I can handle the
3 crowding, but if that doesn't come in, I
4 don't think I can handle the crowding,
5 because there are young kids, they're of
6 age, they're men, and they live in these
7 houses, and they can be recruited, and
8 they can be part of the problem. And
9 I'm wondering how this problem is going
10 to be -- when that building was open we
11 -- I enjoy housing people. I love that
12 you're giving us an opportunity to have
13 more people having places to sleep.
14 This is very important in Philadelphia,
15 but I remember a buzz all night long,
16 buzzing like bees just all night long
17 until the police closed down the Chinese
18 store from being open at 4 o'clock to
19 closing at 12:00. And that buzzing
20 stopped after 12:00. But it continued
21 in another way. There's a buzzing going
22 on. Then when the building closed, I
23 was like, what's going on, there's no
24 noise outside. And it wasn't because of

1 people, because if you go in your house
2 and close the door, there are people
3 living around and they go out once in a
4 while to the Chinese store to buy
5 something, no problem. But what was
6 causing the buzzing all night long? And
7 I'm wondering if someone can research
8 that. I'm not that good at geology, I'm
9 not good at history, I'm not good at too
10 much, but I'm good at listening. I'm
11 good at seeing. And the trash, we
12 picked up trash the other day. We were
13 picking up trash and digging it out and
14 trying to push something under it to
15 pull it up. It was hot. It was ready
16 to burn, because it's leaves and all.

17 When you have a Chinese store and
18 a hundred-and-something people new in
19 the area, you're going to have kids just
20 -- they'll eat, they'll just let go of
21 the packet. That's my job. My job is
22 can you please get off my car, you -- so
23 it's not your problem now, but I can see
24 a problem when I see 55 units coming. I

1 can see --

2 MR. JOHNS: In terms of the crime
3 and safety, clearly we'll work with the
4 councilwoman's office and the local
5 police district asking to move forward
6 on the plans for this development. In
7 fact, I think we had a meeting or two
8 where we had the police here. And so,
9 yeah, on all of our new developments we
10 have studies that showed that crime is
11 much lower at any development that we've
12 done and in the surrounding communities.
13 So the new developments that we've done
14 have actually improved the level of
15 safety and security in the neighborhood.
16 We'll definitely be -- continue to work
17 with the councilwoman's office and the
18 local police on those issues.

19 ELIZABETH NWIZUGBO: I want to
20 add one more thing to the parking. If
21 you can include parking in that complex
22 in any way, it will help, because I
23 don't think --

24 LISA HOPKINS: I don't see a

1 purpose in the steps.

2 ELIZABETH NWIZUGBO: I don't
3 know. I'm not good at geometry, I'm not
4 good at anything, I'm just saying, if it
5 can't be done, I surrender.

6 MR. JOHNS: It's -- it's almost
7 -- with the Potter's Field in the back,
8 there's nowhere -- there's nowhere to do
9 parking. There's nowhere to put a
10 driveway.

11 LISA HOPKINS: How about in the
12 front instead of the steps?

13 MR. JOHNS: There's not enough
14 room on the pavement.

15 LISA HOPKINS: Because of the
16 sidewalk?

17 MR. JOHNS: Yes. All right.

18 ELIZABETH NWIZUGBO all right.
19 Thank you.

20 SHEILA HARPER: Good evening.
21 Sheila Harper. And I have a few
22 questions. The revised schedule -- I
23 mean, everything seems so up in the air.
24 I know initially it was March. What's

1 your best guesstimate at this point so
2 that we know when we can expect the
3 building to come down?

4 MR. JOHNS: Well, until we get
5 approval from HUD -- I mean, what were
6 we saying? Our best guess was, what,
7 December? Our best guess is December.
8 And, again, that depends on the 106
9 review process. That's our best guess.

10 SHEILA HARPER: What's the HUD
11 review process?

12 MR. JOHNS: That's what we sort
13 of keep talking about, you know, the
14 issue with the Potter's Field, the
15 outcome -- what we're going to do with
16 the Potter's Field, that's the part of
17 the approval process for HUD to give us
18 the approval to demolish the high-rise.
19 Until the resolution of the Potter's
20 Field is made, there is no resolution
21 that allows us to demolish that
22 building.

23 SHEILA HARPER: So if, for
24 example, the answer is, yes, you can

1 demolish the building, then what? Then
2 what if the answer is, no, you can't
3 demolish the building?

4 MR. JOHNS: Don't think we can't
5 demolish.

6 At the point they give us the
7 approval to demolish the building, we're
8 going to move forward with the
9 demolition.

10 SHEILA HARPER: And you normally
11 do demolition in December, in the winter
12 months?

13 MR. JOHNS: Yeah, we've done it
14 in December. We've done demolitions in
15 January. We've done demolitions any
16 time.

17 SHEILA HARPER: And you still
18 plan on imploding, or that will depend
19 on --

20 MR. JOHNS: Now, that will depend
21 on the time of the year, too, because
22 there are only certain times of the year
23 that you can do an implosion. So I
24 don't think you can do an implosion in

1 January or February. You just can't.

2 So those are other factors
3 that --

4 SHEILA HARPER: My concern is,
5 this is federal funds, right, that
6 you're using?

7 MR. JOHNS: Correct.

8 SHEILA HARPER: Does the 30th end
9 the fiscal year for the federal funds?

10 MR. JOHNS: No, the funds that
11 we're using are PHA's funds that don't
12 have a timeframe for this year and the
13 others are private dollars. So that's
14 not an issue.

15 SHEILA HARPER: So in terms of
16 the dollars to take that building down,
17 my concern is, what is it, the end of
18 almost July?

19 MR. JOHNS: We still have the
20 money available. Once we get the
21 approvals, we'll have the money
22 available. So I wouldn't worry about
23 that.

24 SHEILA HARPER: And also thank

1 you so much about picking up the trash.
2 I took pictures of it. I'm like, what
3 is this? I think somebody needs to be
4 around at least weekly. And even with
5 the dumpsters and the gate, no one lives
6 in there, so I can't understand why
7 there's trash on trash day.

8 MR. JOHNS: People come over and
9 dump.

10 SHEILA HARPER: Look it up. I
11 don't know, but I would like to just
12 see -- because right now when you walk
13 down to that corner it looks horrible.

14 MR. JOHNS: As they mentioned,
15 they looked at it, and they're planning
16 to do something.

17 SHEILA HARPER: Frankly at this
18 point we really don't know any more than
19 we did.

20 MR. JOHNS: Until we get through
21 -- I keep saying this, until we get
22 through the 106 review process, there is
23 no approval to demolish. It's the
24 process. It literally is the process.

1 That's the process. It's HUD's process.
2 It's not PHA's process.

3 SHEILA HARPER: Okay.

4 MR. JOHNS: All right. Thank
5 you. I'm going to take these last two
6 questions, because I know we don't have
7 all night here at the church.

8 CORLISS GRAY: My name is Corliss
9 Gray.

10 I remember back when we first
11 started talking about the Potter's Field
12 and whatever, I asked one question. I
13 said, are we still going to get our 55
14 units? My answer was yes.

15 MR. JOHNS: Yes.

16 CORLISS GRAY: Now it seems like
17 it might be more than that -- for the
18 Potter's Field, that it might be some
19 more Potter's Field. If you have to do
20 that, will we still be able to get the
21 55 units?

22 MR. JOHNS: I hope.

23 CORLISS GRAY: But it's not a
24 certainty?

1 MR. JOHNS: Based on what was
2 found so far, we're still building far
3 enough away from any of those anomalies
4 that Mary mentioned, so, yes, we would
5 do the 55. If for some reason they said
6 the Potter's Field is the whole site,
7 then I don't know what. That's a whole
8 another scenario.

9 Based on sort of what we know
10 now, we're confident that we'll be able
11 to do what we're planning to do, which
12 is why we're planning on moving forward
13 with the zoning applications.

14 CORLISS GRAY: In the case that
15 you don't get the 55 units, instead of
16 looking for a place --

17 MR. JOHNS: We're still committed
18 to doing 55 units.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Byberry
20 would be good. I think it will be a
21 good place for PHA.

22 CORLISS GRAY: They had 120.
23 They're brought down to 55 units. The
24 young lady was worried about the trash

1 from 55 units. For 50-some years you
2 put up with the trash from 120 units.
3 So 55 will be probably much less than it
4 was from 120.

5 I'm still committed to the 55
6 units, and if everybody gets out and
7 sweeps and cleans, you won't have trash.

8 MR. JOHNS: That's right. Along
9 with the new residents that move into
10 the development.

11 I can tell you the developments
12 that we built, you can go past there any
13 time of the day or night, they look
14 beautiful. They look absolutely
15 beautiful. We've built over a billion
16 dollars worth of construction over the
17 past decade, and I can tell you that the
18 sites look fantastic, and they're well
19 maintained.

20 CORLISS GRAY: They sure do.

21 MR. JOHNS: You can go to 10th
22 and Poplar, which is Cambridge. If
23 you're going to the airport, you can go
24 down 76, and you look to your left right

1 across right from the refineries is
2 Grays Ferry. You can look at the LIFE
3 center, office building, and it
4 transformed that entire neighborhood.
5 So I can give you examples. Schuylkill
6 Falls, not too far from here. We've
7 done a lot. I can give you a list. If
8 you go to our website, you can see all
9 of the new developments listed, and they
10 have their addresses.

11 I'm going to take the last
12 question so we can all get out of here.

13 KATHERINE ADAMS: Thank you.
14 Katherine Adams.

15 My question is about that white
16 -- the white line, the white rectangle.
17 I know it's owned by someone else, but I
18 believe it's owned by an absentee
19 landlord who owes back taxes.

20 MR. JOHNS: Yes.

21 KATHERINE ADAMS: Why can't the
22 City give us that for a dollar and we
23 can have parking? It would solve a lot
24 of problems. I mean, come on, it's

1 going to help.

2 MR. JOHNS: Actually, as I
3 mentioned earlier, we had 119, 120 units
4 in the high-rise.

5 KATHERINE ADAMS: And it was very
6 crowded.

7 MR. JOHNS: We had 20 parking
8 spaces. That parking lot was never
9 full. It never ever was full.

10 KATHERINE ADAMS: I don't know if
11 maybe it wasn't safe. I don't know.
12 I'm just putting that out there.

13 MR. JOHNS: In terms of the
14 analysis to reduce the amount of parking
15 on site to be able to get the 55 units,
16 to be able to keep the Potter's Field,
17 that was the only thing that we could
18 do.

19 Early on we had looked at
20 acquiring that parcel on the corner. I
21 think it was called Chicky's Bar. If
22 you looked at the title report from
23 Chicky's Bar, there was so much stuff
24 that we literally recoiled, you know

1 what I mean, when --

2 KATHERINE ADAMS: Can we do
3 something about that --

4 MR. JOHNS: The cost, that was
5 the issue. The cost was so high because
6 of the amount of loans and mortgages, et
7 cetera, et cetera, on that property.

8 KATHERINE ADAMS: I understand
9 that. I understand that, the money just
10 rolling over and acquiring it and all
11 that. I think it could benefit the
12 community, and we're trying to make our
13 community stronger versus holding them
14 down by a technicality. In my mind
15 that's what it is, because it's not
16 being used. It's not being cared for.

17 MR. JOHNS: I agree. But more
18 than likely the City will maintain,
19 because it's a lot of -- but the fact of
20 the matter is the property is privately
21 held. If it's privately held, even if
22 it's condemned, if there are past loans
23 or liens, all of that stuff has to be
24 paid. It was close to -- I think it was

1 like 800 thousand.

2 CINDY BASS: There's two things
3 here. So the first is the land
4 surrounding the development and, you
5 know, what is to become of that,
6 basically. And so one of the things
7 that we're doing in our office is taking
8 a look comprehensively at the entire
9 area, because we don't want PHA to make
10 this sort of significant investment in
11 the neighborhood and not do the other
12 things that need to be done. There's a
13 lot of other work that needs to be done.

14 So, you know, we've got a small
15 pot through our RTI funds we're going to
16 be investing in this area, because, you
17 know, it doesn't make sense to do so
18 much and then leave so many other things
19 undone. So there are going to be a lot
20 of things happening in the area.

21 But the second part, obviously,
22 as I understand your question, is about
23 parking and can we acquire that land.
24 So I guess what we need to do is see

1 what kind of parking problem we have
2 first, and then as we look at what's
3 available and how to -- what's the best
4 use. We can certainly talk about it.
5 But we need to see if that's a problem.
6 And then if it is a problem, how do we
7 address it.

8 KATHERINE ADAMS: Thank you for
9 that. I appreciate that.

10 I just had a conversation with a
11 woman who lives directly across the
12 street from Chicky's lot who has an
13 issue already with parking. Of course
14 it would be nice if that became green
15 space or it became more housing if we
16 needed. 55 housing -- if that space was
17 available to us to build upon versus
18 letting it to sit there and be a
19 detraction from this thing we're
20 creating, it seems silly to leave that
21 big thorn in our side.

22 MR. JOHNS: I'm glad that --
23 again, we'll be working with the
24 councilwoman throughout the process, and

1 if there's anything that we can do
2 moving forward, we'll do it.

3 KATHERINE ADAMS: Just one quick
4 question. If for some reason that the
5 Potter's Field is bigger than what we
6 suspect at this time, how would that
7 affect the demolition process? Can that
8 change what occurs, or the method that's
9 being used, or the time -- I know you --

10 MR. JOHNS: I have no --

11 KATHERINE ADAMS: Just putting it
12 out there that if it's larger than what
13 we're imagining now, there's going to be
14 issues we're all going to have about the
15 demolition let alone --

16 MR. JOHNS: If and -- if that
17 happens -- and let's pray and cross our
18 fingers that it doesn't, then we'll have
19 to address those issues at that time.

20 KATHERINE ADAMS: Thank you.

21 MR. JOHNS: Thank you very much.
22 I'm not taking any more questions,
23 because we have to get out of here.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If --

1 MR. JOHNS: We can't hear you,
2 and we do have to leave the church.

3 JOHN WATERFORD: I understand.

4 LISA HOPKINS: The meeting says
5 till 8 o'clock.

6 MR. JOHNS: It should say until
7 7:00.

8 LISA HOPKINS: Your meetings have
9 always gone to 8 o'clock, so why are you
10 going to --

11 CORLISS GRAY: Because he have a
12 right to cut them off any time.

13 MR. JOHNS: We have been civil
14 thus far. Let's leave it that way.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't
16 have a question. I have a solution.
17 Lisa lives on Queen Lane across from the
18 Queen Lane train station. If you look
19 at the houses they're beautiful. She
20 lives -- I don't know what your address
21 is -- but she has a garage on her first
22 level. That's the answer. Raise the
23 houses, give the people a garage
24 underneath the houses. That resolves

1 the issue, and therefore, all 55 people
2 will have their own parking.

3 MR. JOHNS: Remember any time you
4 do a garage, you lose an on street
5 parking space. So you don't technically
6 gain a parking space on the street when
7 you do a garage.

8 Has everybody signed in? If
9 anybody is really dying to ask another
10 question, we'll -- okay.

11 MS. BASS: I really want to thank
12 you. It was productive.

13 This is my Cousin Lisa, and I
14 dragged her out tonight with me. So she
15 just had a real quick question about --
16 she works for the Liberty Resources,
17 which provides housing for the disabled
18 community. And so the question was
19 about the disabled community and are
20 there any units in there that are
21 available for the disabled.

22 MR. JOHNS: Yes, there are. That
23 was a good question. We should have
24 mentioned that when we did the analysis

1 or talked about the units.

2 We are going to have fully
3 handicap -- how many is it -- six full
4 handicap accessible units. There will
5 be handicap accessible units in each
6 category. One, two and three bedrooms
7 will have handicap accessibility.

8 JOHN WATERFORD: The Potter's
9 Field is going to be all natural grass?

10 MR. JOHNS: We don't know. The
11 Potter's Field, again -- again, the
12 Potter's Field -- whatever happens to
13 the Potter's Field comes out of the 106
14 review process.

15 With that I just want to again
16 thank everybody for coming out again.
17 If in the future we need to make a
18 meeting a little bit longer we can do
19 that, but I had anticipated 7 o'clock,
20 so I apologize. If you want us to go to
21 8:00, we can stay to 8:00.

22 LISA HOPKINS: Off the record
23 questions?

24 MR. JOHNS: No, she's here until

1 the end. She's here to the end again.
2 Thank you so much.

3 Before you leave, I'd like to
4 have the pastor say some words on this
5 warm summer day.

6 PASTOR HASTY: Thank you all for
7 staying. We greatly appreciate your
8 various concerns that were raised. And
9 coming together like this enables us to
10 resolve issues and work together. We
11 all have to have a commonality that we
12 can work together. And thank you again,
13 PHA, thank you, community leaders.
14 Thank you, residents, for coming.
15 You're also welcome to attend Sunday
16 service. Some I see in the business
17 area, some I've never seen before, but
18 you are welcome to come.

19 Gracious Father, we thank you for
20 this informative session. We thank you
21 for the various leaders and the various
22 community representatives here that we
23 might look forward with this plan. We
24 might move forward with this project.

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In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

THE AUDIENCE: Amen.

* * *

(Whereupon, the meeting was
concluded at approximately 7:20 p.m.)

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

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I, Michele Matteo, RPR, CCR, hereby
certify that the foregoing is a true and correct
transcript of the proceedings held in this matter, as
transcribed from the stenographic notes taken by me.

Michele Matteo

Michele Matteo, RPR, CCR

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