

1 SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

2 PUBLIC HEARING

3
4 IN RE: FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 53, 2011, AUTHORIZING
5 THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS OF THE CITY
6 OF SCRANTON TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT
7 THE CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND
8 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO BE FUNDED UNDER THE COMMUNITY
9 DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT, CDBG PROGRAM, HOME INVESTMENT
10 PARTNERSHIP, HOME PROGRAM, AND EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS
11 GRANT, ESG PROGRAM.

12
13 HELD:

14
15 Tuesday, September 20, 2011

16
17 LOCATION:

18 Council Chambers
19 Scranton City Hall
20 340 North Washington Avenue
21 Scranton, Pennsylvania

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25 CATHENE S. NARDOZZI- COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

JANET EVANS, PRESIDENT

PAT ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

ROBERT MCGOFF

FRANK JOYCE

JOHN LOSCOMBE

(Not present)

NANCY KRAKE, CITY CLERK

CATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

BOYD HUGHES, SOLICITOR

1 MS. EVANS: I'd like to call this
2 public hearing to order. Roll call, please.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

4 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan.

6 MR. ROGAN: Here.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Loscombe. Mr.
8 Joyce. Mrs. Evans.

9 MS. EVANS: Here. Notice is hereby
10 given that Scranton City Council will hold a
11 public hearing on Tuesday, September 20,
12 2011, at 6:15 p.m. in council chambers,
13 second floor, municipal building, 340 North
14 Washington Avenue, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

15 The purpose of said public hearing
16 is to hear testimony and discuss the
17 following:

18 FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 53, 2011,
19 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE
20 OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON TO TAKE
21 ALL NECESSARY ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE
22 CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR COMMUNITY
23 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO BE
24 FUNDED UNDER THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
25 GRANT, CDBG PROGRAM, HOME INVESTMENT

1 PARTNERSHIP, HOME PROGRAM, AND EMERGENCY
2 SOLUTIONS GRANT, ESG PROGRAM.

3 Our first speaker this evening is
4 Ozzie Quinn.

5 MR. QUINN: Thank you. Ozzie Quinn,
6 homeowner, Scranton. I received a letter
7 this week from the co-chair of the United
8 Way asking us to support them, asking me to
9 support them again this year, and they
10 pointed out some facts and figures that they
11 said and it really hit home. He said more
12 than 30,000 families in Lackawanna County
13 live below the federal poverty level of
14 21,000 for a family of four.

15 Food pantries in our county saw a 68
16 percent increase in the demand over 12
17 months, and of the 28,870 students in the
18 county and the school district, 42 percent
19 qualify for national school lunch program.

20 The reason that hit home is that
21 there is no doubt about it, there is a very
22 much need for food and food pantries. I
23 know when I was with the Taxpayers'
24 Association and you, Janet, we did our
25 collections of the various stores and we did

1 ashame. Unemployment is the highest in the
2 state. When you talk about 21,000 you are
3 talking minimum wage, 8.50, \$8.50 an hour
4 and you just can't go on, and then they have
5 the median income of \$45,628 vs. the state
6 which is \$65,000. Now, we're 20,000 below,
7 but when they do our median income they take
8 into consideration Clarks Summit, the
9 Abingtons, Moscow, all of the wealthier
10 areas throughout the, you know, the suburbs
11 and I don't think that's right for them to
12 get a median income in Scranton, because if
13 you look at the facts, the data in Scranton
14 I'm sure Mike Hanley will tell you we are
15 very, very low income in this area, in the
16 City of Scranton, and it's not right what
17 they are doing because a lot of people are
18 getting left out of being able to get --
19 receive the benefit from the CDBG program to
20 benefit low and moderate income.

21 So I hope you will consider putting
22 aside some money for some food -- for the
23 food pantries and that it will be dispersed
24 properly so we won't leave people out there,
25 you know, hoping that their child gets a

1 meal at school, and if school postponed in
2 the winter they don't get a meal and that's
3 not exaggeration. People will tell you who
4 work in that it's not an exaggeration.

5 The second thing I want to discuss
6 about is the fact that our neighborhoods we
7 all know they have gone to pot. There is no
8 doubt about it, and why because we are the
9 only city, I have been in this a long time,
10 we are the only city in the United States,
11 entitlement city, that doesn't have a block
12 to block housing rehabilitation program
13 where they go up to John Doe or Mrs. Doe and
14 say, "You know, you might need siding or you
15 might need a new chimney or new heating unit
16 and you are allowed up to \$15,000, we'll
17 give you a loan, a deferred loan, if you
18 can't pay it when you pass on or whatever or
19 if you get the money pay it or a low
20 interest loan and if you cannot afford it at
21 1 percent."

22 The only country in the United
23 States -- the only community in the United
24 States. Now, I looked at the list of
25 activities and they say they have money

1 there for Lackawanna Neighbors. Lackawanna
2 Neighbors is a good organization, but for
3 rehabilitation of six homes. That's
4 nothing. You know, it's nothing, and I
5 think they are vacant homes and then they
6 are selling them and when they sell them
7 they sell them for a pretty high price, you
8 know, which I don't think anybody in the low
9 to moderate income would have a hard time
10 buying, you know, unless really were able to
11 get all of the benefits from the various
12 organizations around.

13 So what I'm trying to say is the
14 fact is that we have had -- under
15 Mr. Doherty, Mayor Doherty, \$40 million
16 Community Development Block Grant Funds, \$8
17 million spent for personnel administration.
18 Now, we are still spending before then the
19 OECD to be down there in the Brooks
20 building, is it? On Spruce Street.

21 MS. EVANS: On Spruce Street, yes.

22 MR. QUINN: Scranton Life building,
23 I'm sorry, and the floor is still empty
24 upstairs, okay, and I don't understand it.
25 You are giving us rent, this monthly rent,

1 to Mr. Rinaldi, Mr. Rinaldi also receives a
2 major grant, state grants and federal grants
3 to fix up the 500 block of Lackawanna
4 Avenue. You know, this is crazy, you know?
5 And he is a big donator to the Doherty
6 campaign, you know? So, I mean, let's
7 get -- let's try to help some of these low
8 to moderate income and start to talk to HUD
9 and say, look it, we don't want this housing
10 median income at 45,000 and let's get into
11 reality here with our figures and try to do
12 something. Thank you very much.

13 MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Quinn,
14 and our next speaker is a Michael Passaro.

15 Mrs. Krake, can we send a request,
16 please, to OECD for a copy of their lease
17 agreement with Mr. Rinaldi. I don't know, I
18 can't recall off the top of my head whether
19 it expires. Thank you.

20 (While Mr. Quinn was speaking Mr
21 Joyce took the dais and joined the meeting.)

22 MR. PASSARO: Good evening, Council.

23 MS. EVANS: Good evening.

24 MR. PASSARO: Mike Passaro, city
25 taxpayer, life-long West Scranton resident.

1 I'm here this evening to speak against a
2 proposed park and to accepting the grant
3 from OECD for the Lincoln Jackson proposed
4 park. I brought some pictures of all of the
5 neighborhood parks except the Scranton, West
6 Scranton skate park, which is very well
7 maintained, but these are the other three
8 parks that are in the area and I would like
9 to give them to council --

10 MS. EVANS: Yes.

11 MR. PASSARO: -- for perusal, but I
12 would specifically like to give them to
13 Mr. McGoff first for perusal, if I may?

14 MS. EVANS: Certainly.

15 MR. PASSARO: The reason that I
16 wanted Mr. McGoff to go through them first
17 was because he berated a letter that
18 Mr. Loscombe received and read at council
19 two weeks ago, last week, and it was
20 supposedly only from one city taxpayer who
21 was completely good and disgruntled with the
22 condition of all the area parks, and after
23 Mr. Loscombe read that letter Mr. McGoff, I
24 got the impression a lot of people that I
25 have spoke with got the impression that he

1 went off like a spoiled child and just
2 didn't want to acknowledge any part of that
3 letter.

4 There is dead proof right there of
5 DPW's lack of maintenance for three city
6 parks, Fellows Parks in West Scranton the
7 weeds are overgrown, thousands of cigarette
8 butts, graffiti. Two years ago, I believe,
9 when Fellows Park had some grant money
10 applied to it some sidewalks were put in and
11 some period lighting was put in, the
12 lighting is gorgeous, the sidewalks are
13 nice. Some man came here, I went back
14 through to try and find out who he was, I
15 couldn't, and came and stood at this podium
16 and said, thank you for the sidewalks, thank
17 you for the period lighting, there is some
18 exposed wiring on the period lighting and
19 the sidewalks haven't been backfilled, which
20 is a safety issue. Those pictures show
21 that. Two years later, DPW still hasn't
22 addressed that problem. Those sidewalks are
23 still a death trap.

24 There is knock down brick walls
25 around the Fellows monument. There is one

1 envelope in there that's marked "R" rated
2 for some graffiti on there and that's real
3 nice for, you know, a young family and kids
4 to read.

5 The Allen Park, I still don't if I'm
6 calling that correctly, but it's the corner
7 of Price Street and Main Avenue, the fence
8 is down, the Christmas lights that I spoke
9 of last week mysteriously disappeared,
10 however, there is a picture of some exposed
11 wire extension cords that are up in a tree,
12 remnants of the Christmas lights. A kid
13 come jump up there and grab them. The fence
14 has been knocked down, the PVC fence has
15 been knocked down.

16 DPW has cut the grass at Fellows
17 Park and cut the grass at Allen Park,
18 however, they have not picked up the
19 Gatorade bottles, not picked up everything,
20 just completely rode right over it with a
21 mower. There is a fence post down at the
22 park on the corner of Price and Main, the
23 fence picket is laying in the grass, the
24 lawnmower rode right over that. It just --
25 and this is a DPW that is supposed to take

1 care of another park? I can't absolutely
2 see it happening.

3 There is pictures also of the
4 Novembrino Pool Complex. That's been closed
5 and legitimately, you know, it's kind of off
6 the DPW's radar right now, but there is -- I
7 call it a Pennsylvania palm tree, it's a
8 poison sumac that's five feet tall in the
9 front yard of the pool complex. There is
10 garbage all around it, and so I just don't
11 understand how DPW can handle another, you
12 know, burden when obviously the existing
13 parks are a burden.

14 What we would like to see, there is
15 another speaker here this evening who we
16 have gone around in the neighborhood and we
17 have compiled a petition of all the directly
18 effected neighbors of South Hyde Park, South
19 Sumner, Academy Street and Division that are
20 opposed. We went around with the petition
21 for and a petition against. There is not
22 one signature on "For", which should say
23 something.

24 The people that we did speak with
25 are very interested in having that property

1 if it's going to be torn down added to the
2 tax rolls. It's the oldest school district
3 property in the district and it was never
4 actually on the tax rolls being the oldest
5 it's always been a school.

6 MS. EVANS: Yes.

7 MR. PASSARO: It could be offered to
8 a developer with some stipulations that the
9 homes that go up there, the town homes that
10 go up there are appropriate to the
11 neighborhood, and not Taj Mah Halls or are
12 no, you know, ramshackles, appropriate to
13 the neighborhood, which is fine with us, and
14 we are interested in making sure that, you
15 know, our neighborhood is still held
16 together, you know, and a park just doesn't
17 go up there.

18 There are other, like I said, other
19 avenues than a park. The building could be
20 retrofitted and a lot -- there is a lot of
21 options still ahead. A park isn't the only
22 option. Last week I invited the mayor as
23 far as the crime in my area to come and stay
24 overnight and I haven't checked my answering
25 machine before I left, but as of right now

1 he never returned my phone call, so he is
2 probably not coming over. That's all I have
3 to say right now. Thank you.

4 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Patty
5 Fowler.

6 MS. FOWLER: Good evening, Council.

7 MS. EVANS: Good evening.

8 MS. FOWLER: Patty Fowler, city
9 resident and city employee. I'm a city
10 housing inspector and I'm just asking you to
11 reconsider the removing the \$9,200 from the
12 condemnation budget for the CDBG funds.
13 That will severely effect the way we can do
14 our jobs. In these tough economic times we
15 are seeing more and more where people cannot
16 pay their utility bills which the code by
17 which we must follow requires us to condemn
18 the properties that have no utilities, then
19 we have to -- we can't leave them homeless,
20 we have to put them up even if it's for
21 emergency housing, if you are going to cut
22 our budget from \$9,000 I'm just wondering
23 what's Plan B? Do we have a Plan B?
24 Because we are seeing more and more and more
25 and not less and less and less, so if you

1 are going to cut our money less and less
2 what happens with these people that we are
3 going to end up with more and more?

4 I would just ask you to reconsider
5 the taking of that \$9,000 and go above and
6 beyond and maybe give us a little bit more
7 because we could certainly use it. Thank
8 you.

9 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Our next
10 speaker is Michael Hanley.

11 MR. HANLEY: Good evening. Michael
12 Hanley, executive director of United
13 Neighborhood Centers, 425 Alder Street in
14 Scranton. First of all, I appreciate the
15 opportunity to address city council here
16 this evening. I'm really here to speak
17 about four different applications that we
18 have that are part of the Community
19 Development Block Grant plan, I think that
20 you are considering.

21 The first one is a Project Hope.
22 Project Hope is a program that has been
23 serving the needs of low income children
24 since 1970 here in Lackawanna County. About
25 two-thirds of the 500 children, the 500 plus

1 children that go there every year, come from
2 the City of Scranton. We provide
3 transportation to the camp site in
4 Tunkhannock and it's just a wonderful
5 experience for kids that many of them who
6 never have an opportunity to get outside of
7 the city, and I would like to say that while
8 it is a tremendous recreation program for
9 the children, it's also an educational
10 program.

11 We have a partnership that we have
12 had with the Scranton School District for
13 the last 40 years, Scranton School District
14 provides five teachers on site at that camp
15 to work with the children throughout the
16 summer, to help them keep up with fun
17 activities interacting that way so they are
18 ready to go back to school in September.

19 The other people's of Project Hope
20 that people really don't realize, and this
21 really dovetails on what Mr. Quinn was just
22 saying about hunger in the community, is the
23 nutrition program is tremendously important.
24 These children are children who get school
25 breakfast and school lunch during the school

1 year, and many of their parents come to us
2 during the registration process and express
3 how important it is to them to get them into
4 camp because they have such a hard time
5 feeding their family through the summer
6 months, so the breakfast and lunch and the
7 afternoon snack is as important as the
8 educational pieces, as important as the
9 recreational pieces. The \$40,000 that is in
10 the current plan, just so you realize, is a
11 50 percent cut from the funding that we have
12 been getting over the last few years. I
13 think three years ago we were at \$80,000 for
14 that program as so even at \$40,000 it's a
15 struggle to continue that program and to
16 serve the amount of children that we have
17 been serving, so I would ask you to
18 positively consider that proposal here this
19 evening.

20 The second program that I would like
21 to talk about our Bellevue Saturday program
22 and this is actually a program that Mrs.
23 Evans was very much instrumental in starting
24 a number of years ago when the West Side
25 Boys and Girls Club closed, and they were

1 looking for recreational activities in the
2 West Side for the children. At that time,
3 we were not able to keep our Bellevue Center
4 open because of funding issues and through
5 the council and the mayor's office we are
6 granted \$15,000 a year to continue that, to
7 continue to provide a recreational program
8 for children on Saturdays. I believe what we
9 have in the the application right now is
10 about half of that, so we have already
11 experienced tremendous cut in that program
12 as well, so the funding that is in there is
13 a stretch for us to continue that, but we're
14 certainly committed to that.

15 A third program that we have then is
16 SCOLA, which is an adult literacy program
17 that had been an independent center, an
18 independent agency for the last 26 years.
19 Because of state funding cuts they came to
20 us in April and asked if we would consider a
21 merger or SCOLA and so in April, as of April
22 1, United Neighborhood Centers took SCOLA
23 under our wing and are committed continuing
24 the adult literacy program, and also equally
25 as important I think in our community is

1 English as a second language and citizenship
2 programs for the new immigrants in this
3 community because as we know, the immigrant
4 population here in Scranton is continuing to
5 grow and we at United States Neighborhood
6 Centers feel it's tremendously important to
7 help those new immigrants assimilate into
8 our community, so that \$5,000 that's in the
9 CDBG program in our proposal is just a small
10 piece of what we need to put together to
11 continue that program, and we feel, and I
12 think that many folks here feel as well the
13 importance of that in the continuing
14 thriving of our neighborhoods.

15 And the third piece I'd like to talk
16 about the -- or the fourth piece, rather, is
17 what Patty Fowler just spoke about and
18 that's the Condemnation Assistance Program.
19 This is a program the United Neighborhood
20 Centers have been administering on behalf of
21 the city since I believe it was during Mayor
22 Connors' administration when they came to us
23 and requested that we would take this on to
24 assist families whose apartments had been
25 condemned for health and safety reasons.

1 These are families who are renters,
2 who many times when the city is forced to
3 condemn the property they have already paid
4 the rent or security deposit and they don't
5 get that back, and they are really out in
6 the street with no place to go, no resources
7 so we have staff that are on-call 27/7, 365
8 days a year, to respond to -- from the City,
9 Patty Fowler many times calls our staff at
10 all hours of the day and night. We help the
11 family, put them into a hotel, and help them
12 to find another an apartment and stabilize
13 their lives so they can move on so they are
14 not out on the street.

15 So we feel these are tremendously
16 important programs, they are very diverse
17 programs and I think can give you a picture
18 as many of know the diversity of United
19 Neighborhood Centers and many places and
20 pieces of this community that we touch and
21 we certainly are committed to working with
22 council, working with the OECD office, and
23 continuing the work that we been doing for
24 the last 80 some years here in this
25 community. Thank you.

1 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Hanley, I have just
2 one question, the SCOLA program, are there
3 any efforts to ensure that all of the people
4 that are being taught English are here
5 legally in the country or is it open to
6 anyone?

7 MR. HANLEY: We don't -- I mean, we
8 work with people towards citizenship, so, I
9 mean, they can't become citizens if they are
10 here illegally.

11 MR. ROGAN: Okay. Thank you.

12 MS. EVANS: Our next speaker is
13 Marie Schumacher.

14 MS. SCHUMACHER: Good evening,
15 Council.

16 MS. JOYCE: Good evening.

17 MS. SCHUMACHER: I'll speak tonight
18 solely pretty much on CDBG funding. Unlike
19 past years, there is no money included for
20 economic development. I'd like to know if
21 this is because there is adequate funding
22 remaining from prior years or if the city
23 has thrown in the towel on economic
24 development.

25 Of the 38 applications received,

1 funding is recommended for only 29
2 applications. Of the 29 applicants for
3 which funding is proposed, 17 or just shy of
4 60 percent received funding in the 2011
5 budget.

6 As to projects funded both last year
7 and this, I believe it is noteworthy that
8 the project description of the Lackawanna
9 Neighbors Incorporated Project was funded as
10 a home grant last year and I wonder why it
11 is included in the CDBG this year.

12 \$200,000 is requested for
13 neighborhood police patrols. The 2010 Caper
14 show no money was expended for this item the
15 entire year leaving \$300,000 from which to
16 draw. The recent HUD monitoring report
17 indicates the recent reduction of police
18 officers may cause a halt to this program.
19 Accordingly, I would cut this \$200,000 to a
20 minimal amount sufficient to keep the
21 project alive should the police department
22 reconstitute and again become eligible at
23 which time non spent CDBG funds could be
24 transferred into this account. A reduction
25 to this account could be used to make other

1 projects for which I'm requesting additional
2 funding whole.

3 With respect to the Section 108 loan
4 payments, I question what the actual annual
5 commitment is. The 2010 CAPER showed the
6 Hilton Hotel at \$200,000 and the Steamtown
7 Mall Partners at \$400,000 and only \$34,766
8 was drawn in that year leaving \$631,886
9 available to draw. The 2011 approved amount
10 was \$400,000 for the Hilton Hotel and
11 \$200,000 for the Steamtown Mall Partners.
12 Another \$600,000 on top of the \$631,886
13 available to draw at the end of the prior
14 year. Now this year it's another 640.
15 Perhaps Mr. Rogan could find out the amounts
16 remaining on these loans and the annual
17 payments schedule through satisfaction.

18 Demolition of the hazardous
19 structures. Thee 2010 CDBG shows a zero
20 amount drawn for that year leaving \$200,000
21 available to draw. Last year another
22 \$350,000 was allocated and now an additional
23 \$210,000 is being recommended. Again,
24 perhaps Mr. Rogan could find out the current
25 amount available to draw for this project.

United Neighborhood Centers

1
2 Condemnation Assistance Project. The 2010
3 CAPER showed a draw of \$31,397 leaving
4 \$68,602 available to draw. \$50,000 was
5 funded in the 2011 request and another
6 \$96,500 is being requested in 2012. Again,
7 perhaps Mr. Rogan could find out the current
8 amount available to draw for this project.

Paving in low and moderate areas.

9
10 The 2010 CAPER showed a draw of \$6,500
11 leaving a \$193,500 available to draw.
12 \$600,000 was funded in the 2011 request and
13 the another \$500,000 is being submitted for
14 approval for 2012. It will be a very long
15 time before there will be adequate paving
16 funding so the question here is how much is
17 currently available and when will it be
18 spent down?

19 Now, as to the 12 projects which did
20 appear in last -- received funding last
21 year, the application of the Weston Field
22 Bulls Head Resident Group for one half
23 million dollars to remove and replace the
24 terra cotta tile roof of the Weston Field
25 Complex troubles me in several respects.

1 First, what good is \$25,000 funding
2 for a \$500,000 project? It seems to me a
3 roof is an all or nothing project.

4 Second, when I checked last evening
5 Weston Field was a city park so why would a
6 resident's association be put in charge of
7 this project instead of the city's Parks and
8 Rec Department?

9 Finally, back in July \$300,000
10 received by Parks and Rec from the Weston
11 trust was transferred to the operating
12 budget. Why wasn't this used for this roof?
13 More on this in Fourth Order.

14 Our unpaid city forester requested
15 \$75,000, but only \$25,000 is recommended.
16 The relatively low tree damage and attendant
17 utilities disruption is a testament to the
18 dedication of Tony Santoli and I believe he
19 should receive the entire \$75,000. Can you
20 just imagine what this city would have been
21 like during that windstorm if the roughly
22 900 trees that had been removed or that were
23 dead or damaged had still been standing,
24 which probably would have happened without
25 Tony.

1 The city's Vacant Property Review
2 Committee requested \$100,000 but only
3 \$25,000 funding is a recommended for
4 approval. I believe the entire \$100,000
5 should be funded as this committee could
6 save many vacant properties from demolition
7 with adequate funding, and perhaps I'll have
8 time to finish up the rest during Fourth
9 Order of the regular meeting. Thank you.

10 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

11 MR. JOYCE: Thank you.

12 MS. EVANS: Our next speaker is Judy
13 Merkle.

14 MS. MERKLE: Good evening, Council.

15 MS. EVANS: Good evening.

16 MS. MERKLE: My name is Judy Merkle
17 and I'm a resident and taxpayer of the City
18 of Scranton. Every day we pick up the
19 newspaper and the main theme is deficits.
20 How in the world can a proposed city park at
21 Lincoln Jackson Elementary School reduce the
22 deficit? This is not a solution to the
23 city's deficit. Deficits happen because of
24 mismanagement. It's the people's money and
25 it has been mismanaged for years.

1 No one in the neighborhood wants
2 another city park. We have huge problems in
3 our neighborhood as it is. A city park is
4 not a solution. Some of our friends and
5 neighbors in -- around the school have
6 signed a petition opposing the park at
7 Lincoln Jackson. Albeit, this is not a
8 scientific study it's very, very revealing.

9 I live within three homes of this
10 proposed park. I spoke to a realtor who
11 informed me that if a park is erected at
12 Lincoln Jackson, property values may
13 diminish by as much as 30 percent. There
14 are plenty of parks in West Scranton. There
15 is Allen Park, which is renamed needle park,
16 obviously, because of the hyperdermic
17 needles that are all over there. There is
18 Fellows Park, where a stabbing took place.
19 There is also the Novembrino complex, and
20 it's closed in the winter, and we have the
21 Jackson Street skate park that has been
22 redone twice.

23 Numerous baseball fields are also in
24 our community and Tripp's Park. I don't
25 believe any of these facilities generate any

1 revenue. Our once pristine neighborhood has
2 become a melting pot of hoodlums, gangs,
3 thieves. My grandson was robbed at gunpoint
4 across the street from Lincoln Jackson.

5 Another city park, who will staff
6 it? We don't have much staffing now to
7 cover the city. It's time to stop blaming
8 city council for deficits because of the
9 property tax reduction. And as for
10 additional layoffs for our public safety
11 employees, the people of the city say enough
12 is enough. We pay city, county, school and
13 library taxes. Based on what we have had in
14 the past, it's outrageous to know that there
15 is no outlet for the people of the City of
16 Scranton to go to except here, and you are
17 the only ones who will listen. Thank you.

18 MS. EVANS: Thank you very much.

19 Mary Ann Iezzi.

20 MS. IEZZI: Good evening, Council.
21 My name is Mary Ann Iezzi, I'm the executive
22 director of the Dress for Success
23 Lackawanna. I did forward a letter to
24 council the other day, if you did not
25 receive it I do have some copies here.

1 MS. EVANS: Actually, I was able to
2 get my mail again this afternoon and it was
3 included in our mail and I have read it.

4 MS. IEZZI: Great. Thank you very
5 much. Well, then you are familiar with our
6 mission. Our mission is to promote the
7 economic independence of the low income
8 woman by providing them with professional
9 attire, the network of support and the
10 career tools necessary for these women to
11 gain employment. We are currently in our
12 12th year of service to our community and we
13 have served over 4,000 women locally in
14 helping them gain employment and retain that
15 employment, so we are an agency who has seen
16 firsthand the need for our services.

17 Most recently, we have now moved
18 beyond the suiting services. We have
19 developed three new programs to help these
20 woman become prepared for employment, to
21 obtain that employment, and to retain that
22 employment. So our services are a continuum
23 of care, they are provided free and they are
24 ongoing. It's a lifetime membership, women
25 can always come back to us once they have

1 been a part of our program.

2 It's due to this growth that we are
3 in need of the additional funding. Being a
4 small nonprofit, we rely heavily on small
5 grants, monetary and in-kind donations and
6 it's because of this that we need this
7 funding to help us continue to achieve our
8 goals and to continue to provide these
9 services to these women who are in such need
10 of our programs.

11 Dress for Success has received
12 funding in the past from the City of
13 Scranton, and on behalf of Dress for
14 Success, our board of directors and the
15 women we serve, I'd just like to ask you to
16 reconsider and, you know, continue
17 supporting our programs. Thank you very
18 much.

19 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

20 MR. JOYCE: Thank you.

21 MS. EVANS: That concludes our
22 speaker's list. Is there anyone else who
23 cares to address council?

24 MR. ZALOSKY: Hi, I'll keep my
25 remarks brief. My name is Dr. Steve

1 Zalosky, and I'm representing the Healthy
2 Northeast Pennsylvania Initiative. I come
3 here before you to support the CDBG
4 application to address isolation, depression
5 and suicide prevention in the elderly in the
6 City of Scranton. We did not receive
7 funding last year as part of the budget, but
8 what we are looking, and we did follow
9 through and receive and develop out of our
10 operating budget the program to address over
11 2000 elderly at risk in the City of Scranton
12 as result of prior funding.

13 We reached out to 96 family practice
14 physicians where elderly are mostly commonly
15 seen and signs and symptoms of depression.
16 We have in Northeastern Pennsylvania one of
17 the highest suicide rates of elderly in the
18 country and we feel on behalf of the
19 hospitals in both Lackawanna County and
20 Luzerne County, primarily in the City of
21 Scranton, that in conjunction with
22 physicians that are dealing with elderly at
23 risk that we can prevent and get access and
24 give them resources to Telespond, Area
25 Agency on Aging, to link them to some of the

1 services such as Meals on Wheels.

2 So I'm just here in support of our
3 application and just wanted to show up to
4 represent the initiative, so, thank you.

5 MS. EVANS: I'm sorry, I didn't hear
6 you initially, the name of the organization?

7 MR. ZALOSKY: Healthy Northeast
8 Pennsylvania Initiative. It's a consortium,
9 a community based consortium. The operating
10 budget for the initiative is less than
11 \$70,000. The intent is to identify gaps in
12 the services for health care for at risk
13 population in the City of Scranton, and one
14 of the key areas that we are dealing with
15 here is this at risk elderly population that
16 are underserved, so we been working in this
17 area for the past three years and have
18 gained physician's support.

19 We have developed resource support
20 manuals for physician offices and we
21 continue to apply in other areas for
22 applications for funding.

23 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Are there
24 any other final speakers?

25 MR. JACKOWITZ: Good evening,

1 Council, Bill Jackowitz, South Scranton
2 resident. First of all, I can't believe we
3 are here speaking about parks, but we are.
4 I do not claim to know a lot about OECD
5 funds and CDBG funds because my opinion they
6 are very complicated, but I do know from
7 being a regular speaker at city council
8 meetings for the last eight to nine years, I
9 have heard our past representatives who
10 were our city council representatives then
11 week after week after week tell us about how
12 the money is being spent and how everything
13 is being monitored and so on and so forth.

14 But I also know that we just went
15 through a HUD audit, I guess, or a HUD
16 investigation, whatever you would like to
17 call it, and we really didn't fair very well
18 on that according to what I'm been told and
19 the knowledge that I have received.

20 Now, my belief is that the majority
21 of the neighborhoods in Scranton are low to
22 moderate income. I don't think we have very
23 many influential high income areas or
24 neighborhoods in the City of Scranton. The
25 majority of them are moderate income. Now,

1 I know there is an initiative going on right
2 now with \$141,000 for police vehicles; am I
3 correct on that?

4 MS. EVANS: Yes.

5 MR. JACKOWITZ: You know, and
6 according to what I read in my favorite
7 newspaper, the Times-Tribune, Linda Aebli is
8 basically saying that, you know, the money
9 is probably not going to be able to be used
10 because we really don't have enough low to
11 moderate incomes in the City of Scranton,
12 and I just kind of find that really hard to
13 believe. I mean, the last couple of years
14 we haven't used the money for beat officers
15 or patrol officers in the neighborhoods, the
16 money kind of just sat there stagnant; am I
17 correct on that?

18 MS. EVANS: Actually, I believe
19 there is -- I'm going to be touching a bit
20 on this under motions this evening, but I
21 believe there is over \$600,000 available for
22 funding for neighborhood police patrols,
23 however, funding cannot be touched because
24 of the mayor's recent layoffs of 13 police
25 officers.

1 I think what Ms. Aebli failed to
2 mention in the article that you read and
3 you're referring to is the fact that, again,
4 there is over \$600,000 available for
5 neighborhood police patrols in the future,
6 and once again, they've been funded in the
7 2012 proposal by the administration which
8 indicates at least to me that at some point
9 in the future when the city is once again
10 eligible to use the funding neighborhood
11 police patrols, you know, will be hired, and
12 at that time I'm sure that the neighborhood
13 police patrols can also use police vehicles
14 within those low to moderate income areas to
15 which they are specifically assigned.

16 MR. JACKOWITZ: Yeah, but haven't
17 we -- you know, going back to 2009, 2010,
18 how many -- how many police officers using
19 that money that was available, how many did
20 we hire? Do you have an estimate or
21 guesstimate?

22 MS. EVANS: I don't, but I don't
23 imagine it has been very many.

24 MR. JACKOWITZ: Exactly, so that's
25 my point. You know, that money has sat

1 there and never been used and we all know,
2 the residents of Scranton, that we do have
3 crime in the City of Scranton. I mean, the
4 people here from West Side are saying, you
5 know, they are experiencing it. Living in
6 South Side, we have experienced it. The
7 Hill Section has experienced it. Every
8 section within the City of Scranton with the
9 exception of probably Minooka has
10 experienced crime, but yet, the money sat
11 there and it was never used.

12 And I'm just having a hard time
13 understanding that because now we are having
14 a big hoopla about a park, two parks to be
15 exact. I mean, isn't public safety and
16 safety of the residents of the City of
17 Scranton more important? To me it is. I
18 mean, I'm just -- I just don't understand.
19 Like I said, I can't believe we are having
20 this discussion about parks.

21 I work in an area where a lot of
22 people from outside the City of Scranton
23 work. Different counties, different states,
24 people work, come in from Delaware and New
25 Jersey, and I tell you what, they laugh at

1 Scranton. It's hard to be a Scranton
2 resident and tried to defend the city
3 because they are, like, you are laying off
4 police officers, you are laying off
5 firefighters, your roads are the worst roads
6 in the area, but yet you are arguing and
7 fighting over parks. And you know, I have
8 to agree with them.

9 I mean, we spent \$350,000 on a dog
10 park at Connell Park, granted there were
11 some other additions to the park, but most
12 of the cities spent 80 to 90 thousand
13 dollars for a dog park. If you go up to
14 Connell Park all it is a fence. There is a
15 fence around the area, they put in a couple
16 of teeter-toters and a slide, but, I mean,
17 we spent 350,000 bucks on that. Now, we are
18 looking at another 350,000 for the park in
19 West Scranton, but not only that the school
20 board, the Scranton School Board claims
21 poverty all the time, the teachers claim
22 poverty all the time, but yet they are
23 willing to sell or lease the building, the
24 Jackson Lincoln school to the City for a
25 dollar, and that came directly from the

1 school board president Mr. Lesh. I mean,
2 where is the sense in that? I find that
3 absolutely no sense whatsoever in that.

4 And as far as the school board is
5 concerned, you know, they are screaming
6 poverty then they better look at leasing
7 that building or selling that building for a
8 dollar and that property for a dollar and
9 they need to sell it to someone who is going
10 to pay full value for that property and pay
11 taxes on it because it's ridiculous. I
12 mean, the city is ridiculous and the people
13 who support it are even more ridiculous than
14 the policies because they should know
15 better. They should be hopefully a little
16 bit more intelligence and actually think
17 about the citizens.

18 Look at what's going on in the Sewer
19 Authority. Gene Barrett, you know, he is
20 going to sue or go back into court because
21 he lost a court case that saved the citizens
22 of Scranton \$2.5 million or \$2.9 million,
23 but he is going to take it to Court. Think
24 about it. Is that logical. In my opinion,
25 no.

1 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

2 MR. JOYCE: If I could just briefly
3 shed some light on what Councilwoman Evans
4 said before, we do have funding available
5 for neighborhood police patrols, that was
6 indicated in a letter sent from Ms. Aebli to
7 council's office I believe it was a few
8 weeks ago. There was some money left in
9 2009 and 2010 and, of course, there is the
10 allocation from 2011.

11 In the operating budget that was
12 sent down to council, that funding -- it was
13 indicated in the operating budget that the
14 administration sent down, that a portion of
15 that funding would be used to fund officers
16 salaries, however, through the course of the
17 year it was found that that money cannot be
18 used to simply supplement officer's salaries
19 that are already hired, and furthermore, it
20 must be used to actually hire neighborhood
21 police patrols not supplement -- not fund
22 the officers that we already have.

23 Therefore, I believe it was going to
24 be used to fund 12 or 13 officers, and
25 ironically, that was the number of officers

1 that Mayor Doherty decided to layoff.

2 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Are there
3 any other speakers, and then I believe we
4 will have to end the public hearing because
5 we are getting very close to 7:00 and the
6 regularly scheduled meeting of city council
7 should begun at 6:30.

8 MS. FOSTER: I'll be very brief.
9 Karen Foster, president of the West Scranton
10 Hyde Park Neighborhood Watch, resident of
11 West Scranton.

12 MS. EVANS: Good evening.

13 MS. FOSTER: Good evening. I came
14 this evening because my fellow neighbors in
15 the area of Lincoln Jackson had some
16 concerns regarding the closure of Lincoln
17 Jackson and the past summer events. I have
18 worked closely with the Scranton Police
19 Department as well as city council and the
20 mayor and he we have been talking about how
21 to approve improve this area. There have
22 been some large patrols to try to reduce the
23 crime that's been happening, but the reports
24 have been in the last several weeks there
25 has been an improvement.

1 I understand that this particular
2 grant money needs to be used for a specific
3 purpose, and if there is \$350,000 designated
4 to that property the conversation we will
5 have next week with the group of neighbors
6 so we can best see what will help that
7 property, if at all.

8 So I just wanted to let you know
9 that we to plan to meet with them and then
10 have a formal meeting with city officials to
11 let the government know how they would like
12 to see that property held.

13 Also, I don't know if you had an
14 opportunity to look at your e-mails, but I
15 was looking into a program that is used
16 throughout other areas, not necessarily in
17 Pennsylvania, it's a tax for -- tax relief
18 or a tax credit and basically it's something
19 that is setup for senior citizens and
20 disabled people who could give volunteer
21 time and it will be set up as "X" amount of
22 hours, set up an "X" amount of rate and that
23 would then come off either their school tax
24 if they work for the school or come off of
25 the property tax.

1 This could be a win-win situation in
2 light of the overwhelming responsibilities
3 of taking care of the parks and other
4 properties in the city. That's all I have.
5 Thank you.

6 MS. EVANS: Thank you. This public
7 hearing is now adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes of testimony taken by me at the hearing of the above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the same to the best of my ability.

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR
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