

PUBLIC INPUT HEARING
October 25, 2016

Name/Association	Question/Comment	Answer/Response
Linda Zaimis - Schuylkill River Park Community Garden	Is the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden considered exempt as city-owned?	Yes. This property is exempt from stormwater charges under Section 19-1602 of the Philadelphia Code because it is a City-owned vacant parcel.
Justin Navarro – Spring Gardens	Has Spring Gardens lost its exemption because ownership of the parcels was transferred to the City Parks and Recreation Department from the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (RDA)?	Bill 160458, adopted on September 6, 2016, authorizes the Commissioner of Public Property to accept title to approximately 27 parcels at this location and includes these properties among the area designated as part of the Fairmount Park System. However, the transfer of title has not yet occurred. All of the parcels are still owned by either RDA or the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). Parcels owned by RDA are exempt as vacant City-owned parcels. Parcels owned by PHA are billed to PHA subject to the 5% PHA discount.
Jennifer Gold – Liberty Lands	Supports exemption.	Please note that the Liberty Lands community garden at 931-61 N. 3 rd Street was evaluated as part of the potentially eligible 231 non-exempt parcels. Actual eligibility based on all of the criteria in the ordinance has not been determined.
Misako Scott – Urban Tree Community	Supports exemption.	Please note that some parcels referred to in this testimony were evaluated as part of the potentially eligible 231 non-exempt parcels and other parcels are currently exempt as City-owned vacant parcels. Actual eligibility of the non-exempt parcels for an exemption or discount based on all of the criteria in the ordinance has not been determined.
Bob Jobin – Bouvier Community Garden	Supports exemption. Also submitted written testimony.	Please note that the Bouvier Community Garden at 1348-1350 S. Bouvier Street was evaluated as part of the potentially eligible 231 non-exempt parcel. Actual eligibility based on all of the criteria in the ordinance has not been determined.
Tom Hardenbergh – Southwark Queen Village Community Garden	Supports exemption.	Please note that this garden is exempt from stormwater charges under Philadelphia Code 19-1602 because it is on a vacant City-owned parcel.

Sharon Hilebrand – Brewerytown Garden	Garden association currently does not pay a stormwater fee.	Please note that this garden currently is exempt from stormwater charges under Philadelphia Code 19-1602 because it is on vacant City-owned parcels.
Robert Ballenger	Does not have a position on the merits. Submitted written questions.	See response to written questions, attached.
Russ Troyar – Spring Gardens	Is not currently paying stormwater bills.	See response to Mr. Navarro, above.
Jenny Greenberg – Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT)	Supports Exemption.	
Gregory Duffy (NGT)	Supports exemption.	
Fee Sepahi - Ralph Books Park Community Garden at 20 th and Tasker	Supports exemption. Noted that water bill is being paid by someone else.	Please note that some of the parcels at this location are exempt under Philadelphia Code 19-1602 as vacant City-owned parcels.
Julianne Ortega – Pennsylvania Horticultural Society	Supports exemption.	
Janet Finegar – Liberty Lands, Orianna Park, Green Acres, and Emerald Park	Supports exemption.	See response to Ms. Gold, above, regarding Liberty Lands. Orianna Park was evaluated as part of the potentially eligible 231 non-exempt parcels. Actual eligibility of this parcel based on all of the criteria in the ordinance has not been determined. The garden parcel at 2304-06 Emerald Street was not evaluated but is an exempt parcel owned by Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC).
Aviva Kapust – Village of Arts and Humanities	Provided testimony about the Village of Arts and Humanities.	Please note that parcels owned by the Village of Arts and Humanities were evaluated as part of the potentially eligible 231 non-exempt parcels. Actual eligibility based on all of the criteria in the ordinance has not been determined.
Tom Hardenbergh – Southwark Queen Village Community Garden	Our garden has an outstanding bill of about \$3500 or \$3600. If the exemption is passed, will past fees in dispute be forgiven? Will forgiveness of past fees be based on the amount of the discount approved by the Board?	The parcel currently is exempt from stormwater charges because it is a City-owned vacant parcel. Prior bills included a stormwater charge, but those prior stormwater charges were removed in 2015 when PWD confirmed that the parcel was exempt. Currently, this account is billed annually for water only and no charges are in dispute.
Board Member Sonny Popowsky	Are you going to charge amounts not collected on delinquencies from prior bills to other customers in the future?	The revenue loss due to a discount or exemption for community gardens will begin to occur as soon as the ordinance

		<p>becomes effective. In the next rate proceeding, the lost revenue due to the discount or exemption and any adjustments to outstanding balances may result in some increase in charges to other customers. However, the extent to which such factors will result in increased rates in future rate cases has not been determined.</p> <p>Additionally, outstanding amounts may not be collected during the current rate period for various reasons, including abatements or the removal of principal and penalties by the Tax Review Board, corrections of billing errors, stays of enforcement during pending appeals, reclassification of properties as exempt properties in the billing system, and/or the entry into payment agreements or settlement agreements to resolve disputes. Neither the ordinance nor the Board's decision in this proceeding will affect decisions on adjustments to outstanding balances for stormwater services provided to community gardens prior to January 1, 2017, which is the effective date of the ordinance.</p>
--	--	---