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In positive shift, Philadelphia city agencies transfer land to community garden

Philadelphia – On May 8, the city’s Vacant Properties Review Committee recommended that the city transfer the ownership of five parcels of land to New Jerusalem, an addiction recovery center and community garden in North Philadelphia. The transfer will be finalized with City Council’s approval. Run by non-denominational nuns, New Jerusalem has been a welcoming space for the community and people in recovery since the 1980s. The Public Interest Law Center worked with the Philadelphia Land Bank to facilitate the transfer.

“We are encouraged by the Land Bank’s efforts these past few weeks. This proposed transfer of land indicates that the agency is working to improve its commitment to urban agriculture and preservation of vital community resources like New Jerusalem,” said Ebony Griffin, an attorney with the Public Interest Law Center. “Gardens across the city are still facing intense development pressure and gentrification. We hope this action is the start of a reliable commitment from the city and Land Bank to protect community gardens, urban farms, and open space.”

[Earlier this year](#), Griffin and pro bono counsel at Morgan Lewis helped New Jerusalem obtain the deeds to two privately owned lots through adverse possession.

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The Public Interest Law Center uses high-impact legal strategies to advance the civil, social, and economic rights of communities in the Philadelphia region facing discrimination, inequality, and poverty. We use litigation, community education, advocacy, and organizing to secure their access to fundamental resources and services in the areas of public education, housing, health care, employment, environmental justice and voting. For more information visit www.pubintl.org or follow on Twitter @PubIntLawCtr.