

Committee on Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION
AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, May 11, 2026
10:20 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN RUE LANDAU
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR.

RESOLUTION: 260346

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2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

3 Good morning. I now note that the
4 hour has come.

5 Clerk, will you please
6 call the roll to take attendance.
7 Members that are in attendance,
8 will you please indicate that you
9 are present when your name is
10 called.

11 THE CLERK: Chair
12 Phillips.

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
14 Present.

15 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
16 Bass.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
18 Present.

19 THE CLERK: Councilmember
20 Landau.

21 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
22 Present.

23 THE CLERK:
24 Councilmember Jones.

Committee on Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

1 (No response.)

2 THE CLERK:

3 Councilmember Young.

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: And,

6 Councilmember Thomas.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

8 Present.

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

10 Thank you. A quorum of the
11 committee is present and the
12 hearing is now called to order.
13 This is the public hearing of the
14 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
15 Cultural Affairs regarding
16 Resolution No. 260346. The purpose
17 of this public hearing is to hear
18 testimony regarding applicants
19 seeking nomination to serve on a
20 Commission on Parks and Recreation.

21 Before we begin the
22 testimony, are there any opening
23 remarks from our colleagues?

24 (No response.)

Committee on Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

1 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

2 Seeing none, we will proceed.

3 Clerk, will you please read the
4 title of the resolution.

5 THE CLERK: Resolution
6 No. 260346, authorizing Council's
7 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
8 Cultural Affairs to hold public
9 hearings for applicants seeking
10 nomination to serve on the
11 Commission on Parks and Recreation,
12 and further authorizing the
13 committee to recommend for
14 Council's consideration nominations
15 to be forwarded to the Mayor.

16 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
17 Before we begin, I want to
18 acknowledge the strong pool of
19 applicants that we've had today.
20 We received a number of submissions
21 from individuals across the city
22 who are deeply committed to our
23 parks, recreation centers and
24 public spaces. I want to thank our

1 Vice-Chair Councilwoman Cindy Bass
2 for working closely with me on this
3 as well as Council President
4 Kenyatta Johnson.

5 And we want to thank all
6 of you for your diversity of
7 experiences, your background and
8 your passion for parks and recs in
9 the city. We really appreciate it
10 and thank you for showing up. That
11 means a lot. Optional sometimes is
12 really not optional, but people
13 make it optional, I don't know, but
14 y'all came. We appreciate you all.

15 All right. Clerk, will
16 you please call the first panel we
17 have to testify on Resolution No.
18 260346.

19 THE CLERK: Elaine Smith
20 Holton, Elizabeth Class-Maldonado,
21 Jim Marino, Kamiyah Gibson.

22 (Witnesses approached
23 witness table.)

24 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

Committee on Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

1 Okay. Well, thank you so much. If
2 you could for the individuals that
3 are here today who want to be --
4 we're going to go either right to
5 left or left to right. Whoever
6 wants to go first, if you could
7 just state your name for the
8 record, what part of the city you
9 are from and why do you want to
10 serve on the Parks and Recreation
11 Commission, and what makes you
12 qualified and prepared to serve.
13 And if you could do that within 90
14 seconds or so. We're going to just
15 start right here.

16 MS. GIBSON: Good
17 morning. My name is Kamiyah
18 Gibson. I'm from the Olney section
19 of Philadelphia. I teach 5th Grade
20 at Longstreth Elementary in
21 Southwest. And I applied for this
22 position because I'm from 10th and
23 Olney and Cherashore Playground was
24 literally right in my backyard. It

1 was like the back of my house; the
2 alleyway and then the park.

3 And I'm so grateful and
4 thankful that Cherashore is finally
5 getting the upgrade that it so
6 desperately needs. But Parks & Rec
7 has been a community, a home, a
8 family in my life. I grew up at a
9 playground and I just pray that I
10 can be the vessel that it was to
11 me.

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
13 Awesome. And what is one issue you
14 think the Commission should focus
15 on?

16 MS. GIBSON: I'm not
17 sure.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 Okay. All right. Thank you so
20 much for your testimony.

21 MS. SMITH: Good
22 morning. My name is Elaine Smith
23 Holton. I'm the founder and
24 Artistic Director and teaching

1 artist at Phonk!Philly. It's an
2 arts and culture organization that
3 I founded in 2020. We celebrate
4 and we highlight parade culture in
5 the African diaspora. Why I would
6 like to be on this board is that I
7 have successfully partnered with
8 the Hawthorne Cultural Center,
9 which is in South Philly. Oh, I'm
10 from Germantown, by the way.

11 So our organization has
12 really utilized Parks & Rec and the
13 Hawthorne Cultural Center to
14 provide free programming to youth
15 and adults in the city of
16 Philadelphia. And for me, what has
17 been so invaluable and what I think
18 the city is missing is these
19 opportunities to work with
20 organizations like myself who do
21 not have the funding for an
22 infrastructure. And my partnership
23 with the Hawthorne Cultural Center,
24 we have this relationship where I

1 offer free programming to the city
2 where whoever can participate and
3 that it also benefits me because
4 I'm able to run my organization
5 through the building and that
6 infrastructure.

7 I also feel like where
8 we could do a better job with the
9 city is really kind of finding out
10 who are these organizations that
11 need this type of support. I don't
12 feel like you have to necessarily
13 live in the neighborhood to really
14 benefit from the parks and recs and
15 the cultural centers in the city.

16 I think also there
17 should be what I think is like a
18 match day, like an opportunity for
19 supervisors or managers of Parks &
20 Rec to meet organizations in a
21 setting similarly to this where
22 they could be useful. I also feel
23 like there isn't enough
24 communication between Parks & Rec,

1 that I know I've brought in Afro-
2 Brazilian master teachers to the
3 Hawthorne Cultural Center for free
4 programming, but yet no one else in
5 the neighborhood was aware of that.
6 And I just feel we lose these
7 really great opportunities. So
8 thank you for being here. I hope I
9 answered your questions.

10 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

11 Thank you so much. We appreciate
12 you.

13 MS. MALDONADO: Good
14 morning. My name is Elisa
15 Maldonado. I am the Pennsylvania
16 State Director at Trust for Public
17 Land. I live in Germantown. I am
18 originally from Puerto Rico and
19 moved to Philadelphia 11 years ago.
20 And now I call this city my home.
21 My organization, our mission is to
22 connect everyone to the outdoors
23 and we do that in many different
24 ways.

1 We build parks,
2 schoolyards, trails and we try to
3 protect land for everyone to have
4 access to these spaces. For me,
5 it's really important because I had
6 the opportunity to grow up in a
7 neighborhood that we have access to
8 parks and we have beautiful spaces
9 to connect as a community. And now
10 that I live in Germantown and I
11 have a kid, I love the way that we
12 are connected as a community and we
13 use our public spaces as a way to
14 gather, to know each other and
15 build stronger communities that we
16 care and maintain our spaces.

17 And I think I would
18 advocate for that care and
19 maintaining of spaces and working
20 with friend groups and other
21 organizations that are already
22 activating all of our public spaces
23 just to bring those resources to
24 each one of the communities. Thank

1 you.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

3 Thank you. Just a reminder, please
4 state your name for the record and
5 what part of the city you're from,
6 why do you want to serve on a Parks
7 and Rec Commission and what makes
8 you qualified to prepare to serve.

9 MR. MARINO: Yes. Hi.

10 My name is Jim Marino. I currently
11 reside in the Roxborough section of
12 Philadelphia. However, I grew up
13 in North Philadelphia, originally
14 Allegheny until 1993. I'm honored
15 today to be given the opportunity
16 to attend this hearing and to
17 answer any questions you may have
18 today. I am hopeful that after you
19 review my resume and application,
20 along with my answers today, that
21 you'll favorably recommend my name
22 to be added to the Parks and Rec
23 Commission.

24 My extensive background

1 as a former Parks and Recreation
2 employee, volunteer, community
3 fundraiser and organizer, and a
4 relationship builder I feel will
5 serve the Commission well. And if
6 I am appointed, I look forward to
7 serving the city I love once again
8 in this capacity. Growing up in
9 East Falls, the lower end, I was
10 given the opportunity to become a
11 playground rat.

12 As a kid that's known
13 as, you know, person that would
14 come to the playground, just
15 basically live there and rely on
16 the leaders and the rec staff to
17 guide me along the way. It
18 developed into my career, lifelong
19 passion. And I worked in numerous
20 recreation centers and playgrounds
21 throughout the city during my first
22 21 years, and then I went on to
23 become the Assistant Athletic
24 Program Coordinator, which was only

1 a title.

2 I was still considered a
3 Recreation Leader III, but I also
4 became the Race Director of the
5 Blue Cross Broad Street Run for 21
6 years. I served on numerous
7 citywide committees for the Parks
8 and Rec Department, helping to
9 organize various programs
10 throughout the athletic programs.
11 One of the main things that I had
12 done was the golf camps which are
13 non-existent at this point, from
14 what I understand.

15 We had five different
16 weeks where we would go to the
17 local driving ranges and golf
18 courses to teach youngsters how to
19 golf. And we also expanded the
20 program under my supervision to go
21 to approximately 40 rec centers in
22 North and West Philadelphia to
23 introduce the game of golf to
24 playgrounds and day campers that

1 never saw a golf club.

2 And during that period
3 of time, it was the Tiger Woods era
4 so there was a major emphasis on
5 golf with his support. And
6 obviously, it's grown in the
7 fruition of what's happened to
8 Cobbs Creek. And because of the
9 Tiger's backing and things like
10 that, the community in West
11 Philadelphia and the City of
12 Philadelphia has an extremely
13 beneficial program now where kids
14 can learn the game of golf. Adults
15 can be a part of the community. It
16 could be a learning center and
17 things like that. So I feel like
18 way back when, when we were kicking
19 things around with the playground
20 golf, that we might have spurred an
21 interest in the Tiger's Foundation
22 because he did support us even way
23 back when.

24 My other involvement,

1 obviously my background led into
2 other programs. I became the
3 Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
4 for the Parks & Rec Department
5 working with the Office of
6 Emergency Management for 10 years
7 or 12 years. I was the Assistant
8 Director of the Mummers for ten
9 years. I was also the liaison for
10 the Army Navy game back in the
11 100th anniversary.

12 And then the year right
13 after 2001, right after 9/11, my
14 job was basically I was given the
15 keys to Veterans Stadium to tour
16 Secret Service and to set up all
17 the logistics for both events. And
18 so, my background there is, you
19 know, I also got security
20 information. Special event
21 programming has been my forte for
22 the past 20-something years, as I
23 mentioned the parades and things
24 like that.

1 But I've also worked in
2 the community, giving back as a
3 volunteer and teaching and teaching
4 other people how to put on
5 fundraisers through racing or
6 through cow chip bingo for the
7 blind and things like that. I've
8 worked with numerous charities and
9 volunteer groups. My resume will
10 show you. I feel like I'm uniquely
11 qualified being a former employee
12 because I know the department
13 extremely well. And it's not just
14 the playgrounds or Parks & Rec or
15 the recreation side. It's the
16 cultural side.

17 It's the parts of the
18 park where I've been involved in
19 the Belmont Plateau, restoration of
20 the cross-country courses. I've
21 been friends, groups worked with
22 the Friends Group at Gorgas Park.
23 I worked the Friends Group of
24 Riverward. I've worked in various

1 capacities of volunteer in the
2 neighborhood with the ball fields
3 and the local youth organizations
4 and helped them along the way,
5 raised money, helped them beautify
6 the community and make them
7 understand the green space.

8 The most recent
9 involvement I had was about two
10 years ago, and this is a hot topic,
11 was that I worked with kids from
12 the Lankenau School in our
13 community, and they served as
14 interns for two days a week at the
15 local ball fields with me. And I
16 got to know those kids inside and
17 out. And they were such a
18 tremendous asset to the facilities,
19 to the neighborhood. And I
20 introduced them to a lot of the
21 community association people, and
22 it was a wonderful work experience
23 for those kids as part of their
24 schooling. And it was very

1 fulfilling for me to be a part of
2 their lives too.

3 And, you know, what they
4 gave back to the neighborhood and
5 what I was able to dictate with
6 them was a tremendous feeling of
7 accomplishment. So that's some of
8 my background. Obviously there's a
9 lot more things that I can talk
10 about, but I'll save you the time.
11 But my general idea is to get the
12 public more involved in pushing the
13 federal government and state
14 government for funding.

15 I mean, we know funding
16 in the City of Philadelphia, the
17 Parks & Rec Department does not
18 meet the standards of a lot of
19 other big cities. And because of
20 that, we have so many assets that
21 are not being fully utilized. We
22 have so many staff people that we
23 can be pushing more for and having
24 them become engrossed in, in the

1 world of teaching young people and
2 being a part of senior centers and
3 being part of the handicapped
4 facilities and all the other
5 special needs programs that we
6 have.

7 Like I said, I mentioned
8 at one point I was the Chairman of
9 the Bingo for the Blind program.
10 If you want to see a group of
11 people have such a wonderful
12 evening, go to a bingo for the
13 blind at one of our facilities.

14 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
15 Well, I want to thank you so much
16 for sharing. You certainly have a
17 passion for the rec centers, and
18 that's really, really important,
19 Jim. I really appreciate your
20 preparation for this.

21 Are there any further
22 questions from anyone else on the
23 committee?

24 (No response.)

1 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

2 Are there any comments, anything
3 else additional that other
4 panelists would like to share about
5 themselves and their experiences
6 and desire to be on this commission
7 that they did not say?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

10 Okay. Well, I want to thank you so
11 much for coming out today and thank
12 you for your work as a previous
13 Parks & Rec employee. And so,
14 thank you so much for testifying
15 and not making it optional.

16 MR. MARINO: Thank you
17 very much.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So
19 much appreciate it.

20 All right. Clerk, will
21 you please call the next panel we
22 have to testify on Resolution No.
23 260346.

24 THE CLERK: Khalil

1 Salaam, Melissa Young, Olivia
2 Scanlon, Quentin Ellison -- excuse
3 me. Shannon Wink, not Quentin
4 Ellison. Sorry.

5 (Witnesses approached
6 witness table.)

7 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

8 Thank you. Approaching the
9 rostrum, can you please state your
10 name for the record, what part of
11 the city you're from, why do you
12 want to serve on the Parks and
13 Recreation Commission, what makes
14 you qualified and prepared to
15 serve, and what is one issue that
16 you really want to tackle on the
17 Commission hopefully.

18 All right. So over
19 here, state your name for the
20 record and everything else.

21 MS. YOUNG: Sure. Good
22 morning, Councilmembers, and thank
23 you for having me. My name is
24 Melissa Young. I grew up in West

1 Philadelphia, 63rd and Master and
2 spent most of my years in between
3 West Philadelphia and Roxborough.
4 Parks and recreation, like many of
5 the previous panelists said, were
6 the tapestry of me growing up, from
7 learning t-ball in West Philly
8 local playgrounds to spending
9 family reunions and birthday
10 parties and celebrations on Cobbs
11 Creek to learning how to swim at
12 Kendrick Recreation Center in
13 Roxborough, then to being a big dog
14 and becoming a counselor in
15 training at one of the rec summer
16 camps. You couldn't tell me
17 anything, like that was the cr me
18 de la cr me to growing up and being
19 a part of a Philadelphia summer.

20 Fast-forward, now I own
21 a communications agency, Mash
22 Strategies, where we support
23 organizations like Penn Medicine,
24 Gift of Life, at one point WURD

1 Radio. We support talent like
2 Philadelphia Freeway and others.
3 And seeing the impact that parks
4 have, it never leaves me. Right
5 now I'm a Delaware County resident
6 living about five stoplights away
7 from Philadelphia now. And I also
8 see the stark contrast that we have
9 and the ability to create a
10 pickleball park down the street
11 from my house without it being a
12 four-year project, holding our
13 larger organizations that are
14 employers in our neighborhoods
15 accountable to invest in our youth,
16 in our generation. So I think now
17 I have a unique perspective growing
18 up in Philadelphia, but being right
19 down the street and seeing some of
20 those benefits that we have. And I
21 want to bring that to the children
22 that look like me and grew up.
23 I think that having an
24 agency, I've worked with

1 organizations like Police Athletic
2 League, they need our parks and
3 recreation centers. They need our
4 green spaces to know what it looks
5 like. They need to have that
6 pride. When we go in the
7 summertime and we go visit our
8 aunts that may live in a totally
9 different neighborhood and you get
10 to experience Germantown for the
11 first time or you get to go and see
12 your family up in the Northeast, we
13 take pride in those parks and those
14 green spaces.

15 So I would like to bring
16 to the Commission, that investment,
17 that perspective of what I know it
18 feels like to have a beautiful
19 parks and recreation space and hold
20 our capital organizations
21 accountable for that.

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
23 Thank you so much for your work.
24 Melissa?

1 MS. YOUNG: Melissa

2 Young.

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

4 Melissa Young, gotcha. I was
5 taking some notes. I want to make
6 sure I had your right last name
7 there.

8 All right. Perfect.
9 Now, thank you so much. You can
10 please state your name for the
11 record and share your testimony.
12 Thanks for being here.

13 MR. SCANLON: Yes,
14 hello. Thank you, Councilmembers.
15 I greatly appreciate your time. My
16 name is John Scanlon. I am not on
17 the ballot. My wife Olivia Scanlon
18 is. She unfortunately is away on
19 work, so I wanted to come in and
20 represent her because she's -- this
21 is her Mother's Day present. I'm
22 very happy to be here. I just have
23 a few quick remarks on my wife.

24 With over 15 years of

1 fundraising experience in the
2 political, government and nonprofit
3 sectors, she has proven in her
4 professional career to be a
5 coalition builder and staunch
6 proponent of her causes. She has
7 spent time in the Mayor's Office
8 under the Kenney Administration,
9 raising funds for the census and
10 the COVID-19 City Fund, giving her
11 a deep understanding of the
12 complexities and nuances of city
13 governance.

14 As a mother to our
15 daughter and resident in District
16 2, she sees the immense value and
17 benefits our public spaces bring to
18 both young and old, and will be an
19 exceptional advocate for the city's
20 parks. She understands that the
21 city's streets may be the heart of
22 our city, but the parks are our
23 lungs. I believe that she will do
24 her best to continue the dream of

1 William Penn, to ensure that we
2 have a truly green country town by
3 being a cheerleader and fundraiser
4 for Parks & Rec.

5 My personal experience,
6 I also would say that things tend
7 to end up better when Olivia is
8 involved. So I thank you all for
9 your time and consideration. I
10 greatly appreciate it.

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
12 Thank you so much for being a great
13 husband, and it seems like your
14 wife has a great amount of
15 experience around fundraising. We
16 appreciate that, which is really
17 important for our rec centers.

18 Can you please state
19 your name for the record.

20 MS. WINK: Thank you.
21 Good morning. My name is Shannon
22 Wink. I grew up in Northeast
23 Philadelphia and I've lived in
24 Fishtown for about the last 15 or

1 so years, and that's where we are
2 raising our family. I have a
3 background in journalism PR and
4 communications, and I am also a
5 lifelong Parks & Rec user. And I
6 can say unequivocally, we could not
7 raise our children in this city
8 without the resources and the
9 programs that Parks & Rec provides.

10 I know that there are
11 challenges to providing those
12 services equitably. I know that
13 also some of those challenges are
14 just a communications challenge.
15 And sometimes it's about getting
16 the word out and making sure that
17 people know what's there and what's
18 available to them. So I believe
19 that my both professional
20 experience and my personal
21 experience growing up here, using
22 the facilities, raising my family
23 here is a really nice combination
24 to help the Commission achieve its

1 goals. Thank you.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

3 And is there one -- I didn't hear
4 this part. Is there one issue you
5 think the Commission should focus
6 on and what would you contribute if
7 you were --

8 MS. WINK: More
9 resources for afterschool
10 programming and summer camp. We
11 quite literally won the afterschool
12 care lottery at our rec center. I
13 would like to make it so that that
14 is not a game that everyone has to
15 play. We did not win the summer
16 camp lottery. I went in person to
17 five different rec centers to
18 complete five totally different
19 paper applications with different
20 fees at all of those rec centers.
21 I think there's a better, easier
22 way to do that for Parks & Rec and
23 for families.

24 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

1 Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

2 Please state your name
3 for the record and proceed with
4 your testimony.

5 MR. SALAAM: Good
6 morning. My name is Khalil Salaam.
7 I am the Imam and President of
8 Masjid in West Philly, in the
9 neighborhood in which I was born
10 and raised right off of 61st and
11 Webster. I am a business owner. I
12 run a construction management firm
13 here in the City of Philadelphia.
14 And prior to doing that, I had a
15 corporate career for 20 years
16 working for Coca-Cola, Pepsi,
17 Keurig, Dr. Pepper and multiple
18 sales and operational roles before
19 I transitioning into my
20 construction realm.

21 From a personal
22 perspective and why I'm here is, of
23 course I was basically born and
24 raised in the parks of West Philly

1 and Fairmount Park. I grew up
2 riding my bike through the trails
3 of Cobbs Creek into Fairmount Park
4 and in the rec centers. I played
5 basketball here in high school and
6 in college. I played for John
7 Bartram High School. So that was
8 my younger years. And as I've
9 evolved out of sports, I
10 transitioned more into outdoor
11 stuff.

12 So I oversee a young
13 men's youth scouting program and we
14 teach the youth outdoorsman. We
15 teach them archery, intro to
16 hunting, camping and horsemanship.
17 And so, that's where my desire
18 comes from to support this
19 Commission. One of the things that
20 I think is missing or one of the
21 things that I would like to bring
22 to the Commission is connecting the
23 resources to the right individuals,
24 the inner city folks that are

1 normally not introduced or
2 connected to the outdoors, right.
3 So I run archery classes. I'm a
4 certified archery instructor. I do
5 intro to hunting and camping.

6 It's so many of our
7 youth that have never been in the
8 trails that live in the city that
9 are just totally oblivious to the
10 outdoors and what it will bring.
11 And I know what it has done for me
12 from a mental capacity, stress-
13 related and so forth. And I just
14 think that's something that not
15 only the youth, but our whole
16 community needs to have.

17 I do see that there's a
18 gap with the resources that are
19 available because the resources are
20 there, but for the people that need
21 them, it's connecting the dots. So
22 when you talk about the various rec
23 centers that's around, and I'm
24 noticing it's a beautiful job with

1 all of them getting renovated now
2 as well as some of the city-owned
3 property with the neighborhood
4 barns, but some of the other
5 mission-driven organizations don't
6 seem to be connected to those
7 resources. And I feel like if we
8 can try to bridge those gaps, it
9 could be a good thing for the
10 community to benefit from the
11 resources that's available.

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
13 Thank you. And I just wanted to
14 quickly clarify. You currently
15 work for what organization now?

16 MR. SALAAM: So
17 currently I own a construction
18 management firm independently,
19 myself. I'm also the President of
20 Masjid Mujahideen, so I'm the Imam
21 that's in West Philly. And I'm
22 also the Chair of Jawala Scout
23 Outdoors Boys program as well.

24 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

1 Thank you so much for your passion
2 about finding ways to connect young
3 people to the outdoors.

4 I also want to say the
5 Chair recognizes Councilmember
6 Jeffrey J. Young, who is here with
7 us too on our committee.

8 Are there any questions
9 from the members of the committee?
10 Any further questions?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
13 Are there any other items that
14 members of this panel would like to
15 share with us that we did not bring
16 up or you just wanted to say that
17 there would be (inaudible)?

18 MR. SALAAM: Is this
19 time for us to ask any questions or
20 no?

21 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
22 No, we don't take -- do you have a
23 question?

24 MR. SALAAM: Yeah. So I

1 just came across this opportunity
2 within a day before that the
3 application was in and it just
4 struck me, so I applied and so
5 forth. But just a simple question,
6 is this a new commission and if it
7 is, what birthed it?

8 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So
9 this commission has existed in the
10 past, but it's going to be a new
11 body of commissioners. It hasn't
12 existed in many, many years now.
13 And so, they're trying to reinstate
14 it so that we can have an advisory
15 board for our Parks & Rec.

16 MR. SALAAM: Got it.
17 Okay. Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 All right. Thank you so much. I
20 appreciate your testimony. Thank
21 you all for your passion. Just so
22 you know, you can stay in here for
23 the rest of the folks or you can
24 leave if you like. We're going to

1 do a recess and we're going to
2 deliberate on who we would like to
3 recommend to the Mayor for
4 appointment. And then the Mayor
5 ultimately makes the appointment of
6 the final individuals. We're only
7 appointing a handful -- we're going
8 to make a recommendation for a
9 handful and she makes the final
10 appointment. Is that okay? All
11 right. Thank y'all being here. It
12 means a lot.

13 MR. SALAAM: Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

15 All right. Clerk, can you please
16 call the next panel we have to
17 testify on Resolution No. 260346.

18 THE CLERK: Eritrea
19 Abdulhadi.

20 (Witnesses approached
21 witness table.)

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

23 Thank you so much. If you can
24 please state your -- you're our

1 last panel, unless there's anyone
2 else that we did not call here
3 today that has applied. Okay.

4 Please state your name
5 for the record and proceed with
6 your testimony. Just as a
7 reminder, the questions that we
8 have include why are you interested
9 in being a member of the Parks &
10 Rec Commission, what neighborhood
11 you're from. Also, if you could
12 just state more briefly about what
13 you would like to contribute to the
14 Parks & Rec Commission as well.

15 MS. ABDULHADI: Okay.
16 First of all, I want to thank you
17 guys for considering me for this
18 position with the commission. My
19 name is --

20 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Go
21 ahead. Sorry, my fault.

22 MS. ABDULHADI: All
23 right. So my name is Eritrea
24 Abdulhadi. I am born and raised in

1 West Philadelphia. I am a founder
2 and non-profit owner of an
3 organization that founded on STEAF,
4 which is Science, Technology,
5 Engineering, Art, and Financial
6 Literacy. I have been in the
7 Mastery ?? of schools and also rec
8 centers over the years gaining this
9 information and organizations to
10 the youth and their families.

11 I also am a mother of
12 five and a grandmother of three in
13 West Philadelphia, use the
14 recreational centers that we lack
15 of. I am here today to speak on
16 that because the recreational
17 centers in West Philadelphia and
18 Southwest, we have maybe one. And
19 I would love to leverage financial
20 literacy for that very matter and
21 bring that to the communities that
22 are underserved.

23 The reason why I would
24 be a best fit is because I network

1 in my communities. I'm a block
2 captain from 52nd and Spruce. I'm
3 in the heart of the city and YMCA
4 is where I grew up at. That was a
5 part of a rec center that we would
6 call -- I learned gymnastics and so
7 on and so forth. And then when I
8 grew up having my children, I put
9 them in the YMCA to learn how to
10 swim and learn things that we don't
11 have in our underserved
12 communities.

13 I want to bring
14 authority. I want to bring my
15 knowledge and education to the
16 communities and this commission's
17 state and be able to give you guys
18 all the education and knowledge and
19 the disconnect that I see in our
20 communities, and the rec center
21 does play a huge part in our
22 communities for that. And I want
23 to make sure that I can get that
24 out to our communities and to you

1 guys and the Councilmembers that
2 I'm reaching out to as well, if
3 that makes sense.

4 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
5 Yeah, I believe so. I want to say
6 thank you so much for your
7 testimony. Thank you for being
8 here today.

9 Can you please state
10 your name and proceed with your
11 testimony.

12 MR. MCKAY: My name is
13 John Hakeem McKay. I am an
14 operations manager with Eritrea's
15 Care and Ibrahim Youth Scholars.
16 And I just want as a new hire for
17 transparency in the past 30 days, I
18 myself have been boots on the
19 ground working in rec centers.
20 I've been working with Work Ready
21 since 2015 through University of
22 Penn.

23 Many of the
24 Councilmembers know me from

1 Security for Philly grassroots, and
2 I've worked with a variety of
3 organizations. And I'm not just
4 saying this because we're
5 connected, but I just wanted to
6 testify that I have not worked with
7 anyone that has picked up and moved
8 out on programming overnight like
9 Eritrea.

10 We connected about three
11 weeks ago, I made a call to action,
12 just an Instagram video. Hey, I
13 need 12 CEOs that want to open up a
14 24-hour content creation center.
15 She responded, we talked about
16 that. She's opening up a school in
17 Montgomery County. This school,
18 she has a partnership with
19 Montgomery County Community College
20 that is going to allow students to
21 get nine credits through this
22 apprenticeship.

23 We have apprenticeship
24 through Philadelphia Works that she

1 didn't mention, but the biggest
2 thing I wanted to shout out is her
3 systems, her ability. A lot of
4 entrepreneurs and people in
5 management, they don't know how to
6 manage their teams. They don't
7 have the systems in place, the
8 communication systems, the
9 onboarding systems, the proactive
10 outreach.

11 And even being here, I
12 mean, I'm sure it sounds like -- I
13 heard the other brother say he
14 heard about it, you know, last
15 minute and moved out and showed up.
16 So I just want to attest to her
17 ability to manage systems, to bring
18 systems. That's what she's an
19 expert in. And as a person that
20 has worked with the rec centers,
21 having those systems is that thing
22 that we do --

23 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I
24 just want to clarify. So you

1 didn't apply for the Parks and --

2 MR. MCKAY: No, I'm just
3 a witness here.

4 MS. ADULHADI: This is
5 my team and support.

6 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So
7 we just need to take her
8 testimony --

9 MS. GIBSON: This is my
10 testimony.

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
12 Okay. Thank you so much. I
13 appreciate what you do for the City
14 of Philadelphia. And what
15 neighborhood do you live in?

16 MS. ABDULHADI: I'm
17 sorry?

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 What neighborhood do you live in?

20 MS. ABDULHADI: Right on
21 52nd and Spruce.

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
23 42nd and Spruce --

24 MS. ABDULHADI: And I'm

1 the block captain here as well.
2 And so, I need to get my word out
3 is what it is. And this is a good
4 position for me to do that. And
5 thank you so much for sharing what
6 I wasn't able to share for myself
7 and what I do. And I'm really
8 humbled at what I do.

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

10 Aww. All right.

11 Are there any questions
12 from members of the committee?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Is
15 there anything that you wanted to
16 share that you didn't get a chance
17 to share that you just thought
18 about?

19 MS. ABDULHADI: No. Jon
20 got it for me. I appreciate it and
21 I appreciate my team. And I also
22 have been seeing you guys in budget
23 meetings. And also, I've been
24 meeting you guys there as far as

1 education and so on and so forth.
2 And my house -- I'm sorry. This is
3 something I want to mention. I
4 apologize. I have a home that I
5 own free and clear and I want to
6 turn it into a resource center
7 within there and it'll be in
8 conjunction with the Recs
9 Commission. So this position does
10 place me in a place to just put it
11 out there.

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
13 Home resource center you said?

14 MS. ABDULHADI: I'm
15 creating that -- I'm turning my
16 home into a resource center.

17 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
18 Oh, wow.

19 MS. ABDULHADI: Yes, I
20 need the funding. I need the
21 commitments from you guys. And
22 that's why I show up at these
23 places that I do. And because I'm
24 so humble, it leads me to not

1 project what I need to project.

2 And that's why I'm grateful for my
3 partner here.

4 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

5 Yeah. 42nd and Spruce, I think
6 your Councilmember is Gauthier.

7 MS. ABDULHADI: Yes. We
8 were just with her, yes.

9 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

10 She's extremely helpful. She could
11 be able to support you and look
12 into ways in which she can be
13 resourceful to you.

14 MS. ABDULHADI:

15 Absolutely, and One PA as well.

16 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: And
17 One PA, awesome. All right.

18 MS. ABDULHADI: I sit on
19 the board with them.

20 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: You
21 sit on the board with them?

22 MS. ABDULHADI: Wow.

23 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

24 I'm actually reading all these

1 resumes again as you as you all
2 speak, so I want to say thank you.

3 MS. ABDULHADI: Thank
4 you.

5 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
6 Thank you so much.

7 MS. ABDULHADI: Thank
8 you all. Do you guys have any
9 questions for me, because I know I
10 didn't give as much as I needed to?
11 But do you guys have any questions
12 for me?

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
14 No, we're good. Thank you. You
15 answered them.

16 MS. ABDULHADI: I
17 appreciate you.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 Clerk, are there any other panels
20 for this committee?

21 THE CLERK: At this
22 time, there are no other panels for
23 this committee.

24 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: To

1 testify on Resolution No. 260346.
2 Okay. So there being no further
3 witnesses listed today, I will ask
4 if there is anyone else in chambers
5 to testify on Resolution 260346
6 whose name has not yet been called?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

9 You just -- you did that. Seeing a
10 few hands up -- Clerk, will you
11 please -- sorry about that. With
12 that being said, this concludes the
13 testimony on Resolution No. 260346.
14 We will now go into an executive
15 session to consider the
16 applications submitted. However,
17 we're going to recess until -- hold
18 on one second.

19 All right. So we will
20 now recess until 12:40, and we will
21 then make a public recommendation
22 of the members that we're
23 recommending to the committee, all
24 right, the Commission. Thank you

Committee on Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

1 so much.

2 (Brief recess.)

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

4 The hour has come that we are back
5 in Committee session from recess.

6 Clerk will you please
7 call the roll to take attendance.
8 Members that are in attendance,
9 please indicate you are present
10 when your name is called.

11 THE CLERK: Chair
12 Phillips.

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

14 Present.

15 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
16 Bass.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

18 Present.

19 THE CLERK: Councilwoman
20 Landau.

21 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

22 Present.

23 THE CLERK: Councilman
24 Thomas.

Committee on Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS.

2 Present.

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

4 Thank you. A quorum of the
5 committee is present and this
6 hearing is now called back to
7 order. I would like to make a
8 motion for this to be recessed
9 until May 26th at 12:00 p.m. Can I
10 have a second?

11 (Duly seconded.)

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

13 Any opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

16 The ayes have it and the motion
17 will be resumed on May 26th at
18 12:00 p.m. Thank you.

19 (Committee on Parks,
20 Recreation and Cultural Affairs
21 concluded at 12:59 p.m.)

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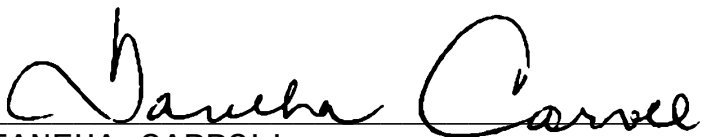
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I, hereby certify that the proceedings
and evidence noted are contained fully and
accurately in the stenographic notes taken
by me in the foregoing matter, and that
this is a correct transcript of the same.


TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this
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unless under the direct control and/or
supervision of the certifying reporter.)

1 10 16:6 100th 16:11 10th 6:22 11 10:19 12 16:7 42:13 12:40 49:20 15 26:24 28:24 1993 12:14 2 2 27:16 20 31:15 20-something 16:22 2001 16:13 2015 41:21 2020 8:3 21 13:22 14:5 24-hour 42:14 260346 21:23 37:17 49:1,5,13 3 30 41:17 4 40 14:21 42nd 44:23 47:5 5 52nd 40:2 44:21 5th 6:19 6 61st 31:10	63rd 23:1 9 9/11 16:13 90 6:13 A Abdulhadi 37:19 38:15,22,24 44:16,20,24 45:19 46:14,19 47:7,14,18,22 48:3,7,16 ability 24:9 43:3,17 able 9:4 19:5 40:17 45:6 47:11 about 18:9 19:10 21:4 24:6 28:24 29:15 33:22 35:2 38:12 42:10,15 43:14 45:18 49:11 Absolutely 47:15 access 11:4,7 accomplishment 19:7 accountable 24:15 25:21 achieve 29:24 across 36:1 action 42:11 activating 11:22 actually 47:24 added 12:22 additional 21:3 Administration 27:8 ADULHADI 44:4 adults 8:15 15:14 advisory 36:14 advocate 11:18 27:19 African 8:5 Afro- 10:1 after 12:18 16:13 afterschool 30:9,11 again 13:7 48:1 agency 23:21 24:24	ago 10:19 18:10 42:11 ahead 38:21 all 7:19 11:22 16:16 20:4 21:20 22:18 26:8 28:8 30:20 34:1 36:19,21 37:10,15 38:16,22 40:18 45:10 47:17,24 48:1,8 49:19,23 Allegheny 12:14 alleyway 7:2 allow 42:20 along 12:20 13:17 18:4 already 11:21 also 9:3,7,16,22 14:3,19 16:9, 19 17:1 24:7 28:6 29:4,13 34:19,22 35:4 38:11 39:7,11 45:21,23 amount 28:14 anniversary 16:11 answer 12:17 answered 10:9 48:15 answers 12:20 any 12:17 20:21 21:2 35:8,10, 13,19 45:11 48:8,11,19 anyone 20:22 38:1 42:7 49:4 anything 21:2 23:17 45:15 apologize 46:4 application 12:19 36:3 applications 30:19 49:16 applied 6:21 36:4 38:3 apply 44:1 appointed 13:6 appointing 37:7 appointment 37:4,5,10 appreciate 10:11 20:19 21:19 26:15 28:10,16 31:1 36:20 44:13 45:20,21 48:17 apprenticeship 42:22,23 approached 22:5 37:20 Approaching 22:8
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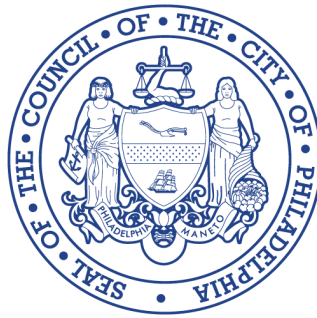
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City of Philadelphia

*City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107*



Meeting Agenda

Monday, May 11, 2026

10:00 AM

Room 400, City Hall

Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

The Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs of the Council of the City of Philadelphia will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 10:00 AM, in Room 400, City Hall, to hear testimony on the following items:

260346

Resolution Authorizing Council's Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to hold public hearings for applicants seeking nomination to serve on the Commission on Parks and Recreation and further authorizing the Committee to recommend for Council's consideration nominations to be forwarded to the mayor.

*To apply for the Commission on Parks and Recreation access the following link:
<https://phlcouncil.com/philadelphia-city-council-opens-application-process-for-commission-on-parks-and-recreation/>*

Copies of the foregoing items are available in the Office of the Chief Clerk of the Council, Room 402, City Hall.