COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, April 21, 2009
11:00 a.m.

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PRESENT:
COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN
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COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILLS 090212, 090213, 090214, 090215, 090218, 090219, 090220, 090221
RESOLUTION 090226

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COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good morning. We apologize for being late, and trust it won't happen again, except for a Tuesday.

We're going to continue our hearings on the Operating Budget, and we'd like to now call before the Council the Fairmount Park.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good morning.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Would you please identify yourself and proceed with your testimony.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning. I'm Mark Focht, the Executive Director of Fairmount Park. I am pleased to appear before City Council to testify on behalf of our Fiscal Year 2010 operating budget. Our proposed operating budget is $12,590,512 for the Fiscal Year 2010.

I would also like to note that

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joining me today are several members of the Fairmount Park senior staff, Fairmount Park Commissioner Phil Price, Jr., and up in front of the railing with me is Barry Bessler, the Chief of Staff for Fairmount Park, and Michael DiBerardinis, the new Commissioner of Parks and Recreation for the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you. Welcome, Michael DiBerardinis. It's good to see you back in the Chambers again.

MR. FOCHT: The Park's proposed operating budget is consistent with our revised and current Fiscal Year 2009 budget. The Class 100 request of $8,733,525 sustains the Park's authorized level of 171 positions. The balance of $3,856,987 is contained in Classes 200, 300, 400 and 500, including $850,000 in Class 500 funding for the Fairmount Park Ranger Corps.

The City's mid-year budget rebalancing actions resulted in a 20 percent reduction to the Park's original Fiscal Year '09 operating budget. This reduced our budget from 15.7 million at the beginning of the current Fiscal Year '09 to the current level of 12.6 million. This funding level, therefore, remains consistent for Fiscal Year '10. As you may recall, Mayor Nutter and this City Council increased the Park's budget by two and a half million from last fiscal year, '08, to the current fiscal year, '09. The $3.1 million rebalancing resulted in the loss of that two and a half million dollar increase, plus an additional $600,000.

The mission of Fairmount Park is to preserve, protect and maintain the open space, trees, natural and cultural resources of Philadelphia's parks for the recreation and enjoyment of both citizens and visitors. The 63 parks of the Fairmount Park system totalling 9,200 acres, or 11 percent of the City, provide Philadelphia citizens and visitors with opportunities for both passive and active recreation and comprise one of the largest municipally operated landscaped park systems in the United States. Fairmount Park also serves as an economic driver for the City by designing, building and maintaining the highest quality public open spaces.

Fairmount Park remains committed to fulfilling our mission while striving to attain the goal of Mayor Nutter's Philadelphia plan. Our daily work helps Philadelphia grow as a green city. The Park's involvement on both the Schuylkill and North Delaware riverfronts, as well as our work in neighborhood and watershed parks, supports the region's economy and enhances the City's sustainability and livability. Fairmount Park continues to prioritize public safety by deploying our Park Rangers in a thoughtful manner and investing in Philadelphia's youth through environmental education and athletic field programs. The pending merger of Fairmount Park and the Department of Recreation will support the Mayor's goal of reforming government. The new Department of Parks and Recreation will improve services for citizens by eliminating duplication of efforts and combining the best practices of both agencies with successful methods used by other parks and recreation departments. The merger will respect the history and mission of both departments while enhancing our incredible assets and strengthening the services we provide.

Fairmount Park's customer service standards and response to citizen service requests will remain a priority. All Park benchmarks regarding tree inspections, turf mowing and permit issuance will remain intact.

Fairmount Park is pursuing several opportunities that will improve services for park users and increase revenue to the General Fund. These include food and beverage vending opportunities at heavily used places throughout the park system, professionally managed parking at selected sites and special events, and the sale of high-quality organic material such as compost and mulch. The last of these initiatives, the sale of the organic material, is already underway as of April 1st at our recycling center in West Fairmount Park.

I am pleased to report on the status of the Park's MBE/WBE/DBE participation. In aggregate, the Park's Fiscal Year '09 participation in contracts is 25 percent. This includes five prime and five subcontracts totalling over $860,000. Between Fiscal Year '08 last year and the current Fiscal Year '09, the Park recorded an increase in the number of minority contracts, combined both prime and sub, from eight to ten. The value of these contracts rose from 797,000 to 863,000 and the percent of total contract value similarly increased from 22 percent to 25 percent of all of our contracts.

I would like to highlight several of our contracts. As many of you are aware, one of the Park's largest groups of contracts is our turf management. Five geographic contracts were bid this spring for the Park by the Procurement Department. The City's Office of Economic Opportunity, OEO, set the participation range for this bundle of contracts at 15 to 20 percent. I am pleased to report that when the contracts were awarded, they included 51 percent participation. An MBEC-certified firm, Minority Services, Inc., was awarded prime contracts totalling $403,046. Minority Services will maintain turf at Fairmount Park sites in three of our five geographic areas. Those are Center City/South Philadelphia, which is one district, West Philadelphia and Northeast Philadelphia.

Similarly, the Park utilizes several contractors for tree removal. A woman-owned business, Edens Corporation, serves as prime for 23 percent of the total amount of tree removal work done by the Park. Additionally, another tree removal contractor, Independence Constructors, utilizes Minority Services, Inc. as a subcontractor for 12 percent of their contract. This participation combined exceeds the 10 to 15 percent range established by OEO.

For tree pruning, the Park similarly utilizes two prime contractors. Davey Tree Experts utilizes Still Man Tree Services as a subcontractor for 10 percent of the work. The other tree pruning prime contractor, Bustleton Services, utilizes Academy Recycling as a subcontractor for 15 percent of their work. Again, this combined participation exceeds the 10 to 15 percent range established by OEO.

Finally, Fairmount Park

utilizes a minority contractor, Eagle Maintenance, for 100 percent of our small equipment repairs.

In the event that the City needs to enact the Plan B budget, the Park would sustain a two percent reduction to our proposed Plan A $12,590,512 Operating Budget. This reduction amounts to $257,550. To achieve the Plan B reduction, the Park will have no reductions of filled or unfilled Class 100 full-time, part-time or seasonal positions. However, to achieve the Plan B reduction, the Park would undertake the following three initiatives:

First of all, we would have to eliminate $92,000 in Class 200 funds for our functional requirements contract for an asset management system. Elimination of this funding would hinder the Park's ability to undertake the functional requirements study needed to plan for and acquire an asset management system to respond to constituent requests, including those coming from both City Council, 3-1-1 and individuals. The Park currently manages information using Excel spreadsheets and an interim rudimentary database. The Park desires to acquire a robust asset management system, and a functional requirements contract is necessary to determine the appropriate system.

The second thing we would have to undertake to achieve the B budget is the elimination of one turf mowing cycle, which would save about $82,000 in Class 200 funds. One mowing cycle will be eliminated either during the warmer, dryer summer months or at the end of the mowing cycle in mid October, depending on weather conditions. This would reduce the Park's contractual mowing from 14 to 13 cycles annually. The loss of one mowing cycle would substantially impact how trash-filled the parks would be, as our contractor is responsible to remove the trash from the turf areas prior to each mowing. Therefore, if we eliminate a mowing cycle, we eliminate one cycle of trash pickup.

And the final thing we would do to meet our Plan B budget is, we would be charged with generating additional revenue amounting to about $84,000. Park staff would look to identify additional revenue opportunities which would also ideally provide additional amenities for park users. Those three things combined would achieve our Plan B two percent reduction.

In conclusion, we at Fairmount Park look forward to the transitions which will occur during Fiscal Year 2010, including the formation of the new Department of Parks and Recreation, as we further our mission of protecting our resources, greening our city and serving our customers.

Thank you, and I would be pleased to answer any questions.

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COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

Let me just ask a question here. The $2.5 million that we appropriated last year, what impact has that had on your budget in terms of operation? What were you going to use those funds for and what's the impact of not having those dollars?

MR. FOCHT: The two and a half million dollars were broken out as follows: A million dollars was specifically intended for tree plantings throughout the City. We actually did expend about 430,000 of that last fall before the budget readjustment occurred. So about 430,000 of that million dollars was spent and those trees are gracing the City.

Additionally, in the other million and a half dollars, we were to fund 21 new staff positions at the Park. Of those, only one position was funded prior to the rebalancing plan. So the other 20 positions have been put on hold.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: What were those?

MR. FOCHT: They were principally front-line men and women in both our grounds maintenance operations and our facilities maintenance operations, the skill trades, like plumbers, carpenters, electricians. And then the grounds maintenance workers are those folks that maintain our ball fields, pick up the trash, maintain the trails. That's where the vast majority of those 20 positions were, to fill in front-line needs. And then additionally, some of the money was to be spent on the purchasing of some new equipment to support those 20 additional new positions. So when those 20 positions were put on hold, as was obviously the purchase of the equipment to support them.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: In the merger of Fairmount Park and the

Department of Recreation, has that come about yet in terms of merging those two departments in terms of providing service or even staffing?

MR. FOCHT: Some functions even prior to the ballot question had been realigned at both Fairmount Park and Recreation. For example, in 2005, the administrative cluster was formed for Fairmount Park and Recreation. So all finance, human resources, technology was all done out of one administrative cluster that serves both departments. So there's no duplication between the departments anymore.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Did you have a savings as a result of that?

MR. FOCHT: Yes. There was a calculated savings of about a half a million dollars annually from forming the cluster.

Subsequent to the ballot passing last November, we've been working on looking at both departments and our operations and better understanding each other and looking at how components might merge. We've not actually operationalized any of that yet, and I would look to Commissioner DiBerardinis, if he would like to add any additional comments about the merger process.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Sure.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thanks, Mark.

Councilwoman, it's our -- I think to meet the deadline in the legislation, which essentially says --

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: First identify yourself.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I'm sorry. Michael DiBerardinis. I'm the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, or at least soon to be formed single organization.

But the legislation dictates that we have a combined agency in place

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by not this July but next July, July of '10, July 1st of '10. But in order to do that, we need to have most of the answers and most of the work done by this December, this coming December, before Christmas, because then we'll have to propose a combined budget for the two agencies.

So we hope that by the end of this calendar year, we will have, in addition to a very strong and aspirational mission and vision and goals for the combined organization, we will have management structures in place, we'll have geographic districts in place, we will know what the units, the Maintenance Unit, the Program Unit, the Cultural Unit, what they all look like and how they will be structured for next year's operating budget. So we're working on that calendar, and we hope to engage citizens, staff, this body, the organized groups all over the City who have an interest in either one of these agencies in helping us think how the best way to do that is.

So we're very excited about that process and completely excited about the enthusiasm of folks wanting to serve on the newly formed Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. That to us is emblematic of the support that these two agencies have, when over 200 people applied to serve on that newly formed Commission. So we're very excited about it and really are anxious to get started on the merger process.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

You may want to stay at the table, Commissioner.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Good morning.

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COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: A couple of questions particularly on street trees. First on pruning, I think you had -- before the goal was always roughly every seven to ten years. Is that still your target times?

MR. FOCHT: Right. The target has always been a seven- to eight-year cycle ideally, is what we would get to. Currently we're probably on a ten- to 11-year cycle with the funding we have and the number of trees we have.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sure. Okay. On tree removal, particularly on curbside trees, I'm never quite sure exactly the process. Is there an actual -- because the owner has some responsibility too, right?

MR. FOCHT: Correct.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there a notice given to the owner first before Fairmount Park comes in? I'm never --

MR. FOCHT: Yes. Actually, many of our tree removals are prompted by the property owner themselves who have a concern about the tree.

The way the process works is that when we receive a call from a constituent, normally a property owner, we dispatch a Fairmount Park arborist to go out and look at the tree, assess the tree. There's a number of categories that we rank the tree, from imminently dangerous to healthy, on a sliding scale. The arborist makes a determination on if the tree should be removed and how soon the tree should be removed. That information is conveyed back to the property owner, and then either we do it via our contracts or our own staff, depending on the level of emergency. There's a lot of factors that go into that decision.

The property owner always has the opportunity to have the tree removed using a private contractor at their own expense if they feel that they want it removed sooner and we agree it should be removed. So there's two options.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there any cost put on the homeowner when Fairmount Park does it?

MR. FOCHT: None.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That's what I thought. Okay. Thank you.

One last question. You talk about the food and beverage vending opportunities. These are new things you're trying to set up, right?

MR. FOCHT: Correct.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Are we talking about like structures or just --

MR. FOCHT: No, Councilman. These would be mobile carts, and they would be at select locations for defined periods of time. And we're looking that this is a pilot program that would start on June 1st and only last through October 31st of this year to see how it's received by the park constituents and also what it is like to manage it as a staff.

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COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. So areas where they're heavily used, like Lemon Hill?

MR. FOCHT: Like perhaps Lemon Hill, yes.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

MR. FOCHT: Pennypack on the Delaware is another example, yes.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And this would be like a private contractor that would do it?

MR. FOCHT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: One contractor?

MR. FOCHT: No. Actually, Procurement today is posting the bid on eContract Philly, and vendors will have the opportunity to respond to one site, to all the sites, to any combination of sites. We will evaluate each bid on a site-by-site basis. So it's not a master concession agreement, no.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Do you have any rough idea how many sites you're looking at yet or is that still in the --

MR. FOCHT: We're looking at only about 16 to 18 sites throughout the whole Park system just to start it as a pilot project.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: See how it works.

MR. FOCHT: Because it will take some responsibility of Park staff to monitor it to make sure everything is being done in compliance and being done appropriately.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Got you. Okay. Sounds like a good idea. Good luck with it.

MR. FOCHT: We hope that it will provide additional services to the park users.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And thank you for all you've helped us with over these years.

MR. FOCHT: Certainly. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The

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Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam President. It is good to see you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Commissioner, Commissioner, how are you both?

MR. FOCHT: Very good. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Good.

COUNCILMAN JONES: It is so very good to see you two sitting at the table. It inspires all of us on Parks and Recreation. My Chairwoman gets tickled pink when she thinks about the possibilities.

I'd like to ask a couple of questions, and one is a hard one, but I need to ask it first and then we can get to the good stuff.

The closing of the 92nd Police Unit within the Park, which had the responsibility for touring the Park, can you give me some feedback on how that transition has happened, what impacts have occurred since that closing of that unit.

MR. FOCHT: Certainly. For those of you that are not familiar, the 92nd closed, but the police officers in the 92nd were assigned to adjacent police districts that buffer both Fairmount Park East and West and Wissahickon Valley Parks. Some officers were assigned to the Traffic Division for special events.

Councilman, I think much to all of our pleasure, it's been a very smooth transition. We have received very good coverage from the adjacent police districts. Most of our tenants in the Park, which were understandably concerned about the abolition of the 92nd, have expressed to us that they've been very pleased with the level of just physical patrols they've seen, police cars in the park from the adjacent districts, outreach that has been done. I'll cite one example. Nancy Kolb, our foster at Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, has been very pleased with the outreach from the 16th Police District, which now covers that section of West Park. The police officers stop there regularly. They check in on the special events. They check in on the parking lot. And we've heard this almost uniformly from our tenants, and also our own staff has observed very good police coverage in the park.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Any time that we make a shift, I want to gauge what the reaction is in the parks. They are vulnerable areas and have been used often as crime scenes, and we want to make sure that is a thing of the past and that in our efforts to try to save money, that we don't throw the baby out with the bath water when it comes to this valuable asset.

Quickly moving along, I am

concerned about our plan to market a lot of our assets. We have, as you've exposed me to, some valuable mansions, some sites within the Park that I consider hidden treasures. If I were to advise someone that was coming to the City of Philadelphia in the future tense -- this is maybe five years from now -- I would say if you were standing there with your family and you wanted to have adult entertainment and you were standing in front of the Marriott, I would suggest they go east, go east to the waterfront, go east to the gambling casinos, go east to some of the more provocative clubs that are down on the waterfront. But if you wanted wholesome family entertainment, I would urge them to go west, west through Logan Circle, west up into the Park, anchoring on the Zoo and so forth.

How are we marketing that kind of two different experiences of Philadelphia and highlighting our parks in the process and some of the mansions, such as Benedict Arnold's mansion and Smith Playground, which they've just opened up? How are we promoting those assets?

MR. FOCHT: Actually, Councilman, there's three very positive things happening right now. The Park recently received a grant to do a marketing study specifically for our historic mansions, so Mount Pleasant that you mentioned and others. We are just -- we literally just issued a request for proposals to marketing firms to begin that process. But that's a federal grant that came through the Preserve America Program. So that's specifically for our historic assets in East and West Park.

Separately and second, our partners at the Fairmount Park Conservancy, our non-profit, have retained a marketing consultant to do an overall brand study, imaging study of the Fairmount Park brand, Fairmount Park system, our 63 parks, and figure out how to promote that widely. Again, we're at about the first phase of that study, and that's much larger than just the historic assets.

And then, thirdly, the greatest concentration of those family-focused assets are, of course, in the Centennial District, with the Zoo, the Mann, Please Touch, our Horticultural Center, Japanese House and Garden, et cetera. We are working very closely -- I personally am working very closely with Please Touch, Mann, Zoo leadership to look at an overall marketing campaign, branding campaign. We've actually developed a logo, a visual identity, for the Centennial District in West Park, specifically to have all the institutions use it to start to bring people out, get brand recognition. We have new signage we put up that identifies the area as the Centennial District. So that's a very targeted, specific thing for that area.

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COUNCILMAN JONES: You could actually spend two or three days with your family and still not experience all there is to experience within our mansion system. Rittenhouse, for example, is the first place paper was manufactured in the United States, and for those of us who have become historic buffs because of our experience in the park, we can appreciate that. So I would be interested in providing to this Council how we mature that marketing effort and how it's going to be promoted to visitors.

In concert with that, I'm also interested in the Schuylkill River Trail connection and how we take advantage of that particular pathway of both visitors to the City of Philadelphia but also consumers as they stop in places like Manayunk and East Falls along the way to experience some of the commercial benefit of being right adjacent to that trail. How are we connecting with that?

MR. FOCHT: There's actually

three projects we have going on right now to serve the trail users to both provide them with amenities and for economic generation. One I've already mentioned, the mobile vending carts, which will be out there to provide a bottle of water, a soft pretzel, something like that, to someone that's biking in from Montgomery County. But specifically, we're working with, as I believe you're aware being on the Board of the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust, renovation of the Bathey House, which is the small brick building off of Kelly Drive in East Falls. That will be renovated as a cafe, restrooms, bike rental, blade rental.

(Bell rung.)

MR. FOCHT: So, again, providing that amenity, most notably restrooms and bottled water, to folks that are on the recreation trail. And then farther up in Manayunk, working with your office last year, approved the expansion, the deck expansion, of Bourbon

Blue to provide that amenity to users in the Manayunk Canal Towpath section of the Schuylkill River Trail. So there's a number of initiatives sprinkled in each section that we're doing.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm going to allow my colleagues to get an opportunity to ask some questions, but I will say last year we challenged you on the affirmative action minority participation contracting goals and I'm pleased to hear that you met that challenge, exceeded that challenge, and particularly under the grass-cutting contract that we mentioned, that every 17-day cycle, that you've cut it up into five different areas, and I'm truly appreciative. We tend to sit over here and we give it to you real hard when you don't do something, but when you hear us and then make adjustments for the affirmative, I have to go on the record and say thank you for that as well.

MR. FOCHT: Thank you very

much.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Good morning, gentlemen.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me also acknowledge and underscore Councilman Jones' comments regarding the improvement and huge progress with MBE/WBE participation. It's very much appreciated.

MR. FOCHT: Certainly.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Revisit Councilwoman Tasco's opening questions. With the deadline being July '10, we then can assume that come -- can we assume that next year at this time there will be one flow chart, one budget, one set of testimony, unless the Commissioner decides that he wants to spread that across the leadership in this team?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Absolutely. We are prepared to -- preparing to, like I said earlier, to have most of the thinking and planning and internal structuring complete by the end of this calendar year in order to present the budget. And the presentation of the budget, budget -- respond to the budget call, we would be putting ourselves on that schedule. So we will be very aggressive in the next six or eight months to move this process forward and to be here roughly this time next year presenting a single budget.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. All right, then.

In addition to -- I'll ask that on the next go-around. Let me get this round of questions in. I was going to ask about the strategic plan, but I'll do that on the next round. On this round I want to ask about the Fairmount Park trust funds that are left to Fairmount Park with varying levels of mandate. Some are very specific mandating the exact patch of land, type of foliage that must be planted, and some are more loosely mandated. How much money currently does the Fairmount Park have in its trust funds?

MR. FOCHT: The trust funds' total, including the investments, are about $11 million. That's 38 different funds.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Can you please provide to Council President a listing of those trust fund dollars to the Chair?

MR. FOCHT: Of course.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you had an extra $5 million in funding -- that's the ball we like to look into -- what would be the most effective way you will spend it so that citizens could actually see it?

MR. FOCHT: I think it would be part of what I talked about in my opening remarks as to how we were initially going to use the two and a half million dollar increase, which is to increase the number of front-line personnel, getting the men and women in both our landscape operations and our facilities maintenance group. They're the individuals that on a day-to-day basis provide the upkeep and maintenance of the Park and its assets, and that is what I think is most visible to the citizens day in and day out.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What about the Fairmount Park Rangers? Where are they in the life of the Park right now?

MR. FOCHT: The Fairmount Park Rangers are funded by this -- through our operating budget at $850,000 a year in Class 500 money. That goes to the non-profit Fairmount Park Ranger Corps. It's blended with a little bit of other money that we have in an endowment. So we have an operating budget of about

$925,000 a year for the Rangers, which employ 21 full-time Rangers and eight seasonal Rangers.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And that has decreased steadily over the years?

MR. FOCHT: No. That's been actually very constant for the last six years or so. If you go back a decade or more, it was much larger, but in the last six to eight years, it's been around that same level of funding and that same number of employees.

I will add, we actually have added several Rangers recently through some, I'd like to think, innovative partnerships. The Philadelphia Water Department, for example, now funds two full-time Rangers at the Fairmount Waterworks, so that complex behind the Art Museum specifically to provide security and visitor interpretation to that site. And those are funded in addition to the 21 I mentioned that are funded through this budget.

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COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What is the Department's involvement and interaction with the Office of Sustainability?

MR. FOCHT: Our involvement is extensive. I serve, in addition to my role at Fairmount Park, I serve as Chair for GreenPlan Philadelphia, the City's comprehensive open space plan, and as part of that, I and a number of my colleagues serve on the Sustainability Working Group that's helping guiding the development of Greenworks, the City's sustainability plan that will be launched next week.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes. I'm aware of that announcement.

With the procurement that is being posted today for the vendors, just discuss, walk through that process, because it appears to vary from department to department, but you don't know unless you ask.

MR. FOCHT: I'm sorry. Which

process?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You said there's a bid being posted today, a procurement bid that's being posted today -- Procurement is posting a bid today with regard to the vendors.

MR. FOCHT: Right. This is an eContract process, and the way it works is for us at Fairmount Park, we identify something we want to do, in this case the mobile vending. We work with Procurement on developing the proper forms. It goes to the Office of Economic Opportunity, and they assign the participation ranges. And then it's posted by Procurement through the eContract process, and as I noted, that's coincidentally being posted today.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

MR. FOCHT: And then Procurement handles the process for us --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.

MR. FOCHT: -- as an operating department. They get the bids. We evaluate the bids with them. They award the contract. It's a City procurement process.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: But it's a collaborative process at the point that prospective candidates have been identified and then the department head, plus Procurement sits down -- or is it the department head and OEO? Who is it?

MR. FOCHT: It's all three: Department head, Procurement and OEO.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. So the legislation has happened last November. Where are we with the strategic plan, with the other recommendations cited in the strategic plan?

MR. FOCHT: The Fairmount Park strategic plan completed in 2005 has 82 major recommendations in it. As of the last status report, which I sent to Council late last fall --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes. I remember that.

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MR. FOCHT: -- we have achieved -- we have completed or are in progress on about, if I remember the number correctly, Councilwoman, 42 of the 81 or so. It's right about the 50 percent mark, are either done or in progress, and the balance are either just beginning or we haven't begun them yet. So remembering that the strategic plan is a ten-year strategic plan. We're at the end of year four. So we're pretty much on target, having accomplished over 50 percent of the recommendations and about 40 percent of the ten-year horizon.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I commend you on that.

That's no longer relevant, because our new Commissioner is here. That's it for this round.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning. I think it's still morning.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I have a general question and it's sort of been touched on, but I was hoping you'd be able to be specific about it, and, that is, we're all very glad to see Mr. DiBerardinis take responsibility for this area, and I assume he'll have some people working directly for him that aren't in the departments, but I am wondering if instead of saving money through a combination by creating another level above the Commission heads, yourself and Ms. Slawson, we are costing the taxpayers half a million more or so dollars a year, and I just wonder what the plan is to have savings in the departments to pay for that. Do we need a head of Fairmount Park and a Rec Commissioner when we have Mr. DiBerardinis? You know what I mean?

Like something has to give to pay for this, and I'm just wondering how we're going to pay for it.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, let me just say, first of all, that I won't be hiring anybody, so there won't be any additional cost. The legislation, as far as I understand it, calls for all three positions. So the legislation -- I don't know how bound we are to this, but certainly it calls for the Commissioner and then the two Directors underneath, and so it keeps that the same. So I don't -- besides what I'm getting paid, that's the only, as far as I can tell, the only new money that's in play here.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And are there synergies that are going to be created in the building management aspect in terms of -- each department currently has, the Commission and the Rec Department, currently have people who are in charge of maintaining buildings. They currently have -- is that going to be combined?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes. Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: How much does that save us?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Right now -- let me just be straight about this. There will be some savings, but I don't think it's going to be astronomical. I think a lot of the efficiencies around the Administration and operation of the two departments, a lot of that has been instituted over the last few years, and some meaningful savings have been accrued in that process. I suspect that there will be some more efficiencies that we can meet as we operate under a combined agency.

What they are right now, quite frankly, we don't know, but I think to assume that this is the reason why the agencies are put together, is about money, I think it's about the quality of service to the citizens. We're not going to cost more. We probably will cost less, but the payoff here is that we have two powerful systems working together to serve the citizens of the City, to take care of these facilities in a way that is at the highest quality and to program for children and families throughout the City in a way that we haven't been able to do in the past, either with the same or with less money. I think that's the -- and in a way to engage citizens directly in that work.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: No, no. I completely subscribe to that, but part of the selling process and every single editorial and every single speech promoting this was synergies.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So people do expect some synergies as a result of this or they expect to know exactly how service is going to be improved.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:

Exactly.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So what I want to say is, next year when you come back, I'd like you to be able to answer one or the other of those questions: How are citizens going to get more service for the same money or what are our savings going to be.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I agree. If I can't come in here to answer those questions to some degree, you should be mad at me. You should be -- you should take --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'd never be mad.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: But it's true. We have to perform. I mean, my point is, we have to perform and we have to meet the demands of the legislation and the expectations of the citizens.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'd love to -- if there was some plan that's currently in operation -- I mean, when you come back before us next year for additional funds, how will we have judged whether or not this year has been a success? What are the goals of the Department in terms of where you're going? In other words, we were supposed to have budgeting for outcomes this year or zero-based budgeting. I wrote a paper on it in 2007, which was how we measure the effect of different programs.

Could you provide to the Chair -- and I'm not asking you to go through it right now -- how we should, in your view, measure the success of one year to another in terms of the different programs and services provided by both departments.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes. And I think again --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- that's a challenge that I put out before to staffs and the leadership both in and outside the departments. That's a challenge that I think we have to meet. I'd be happy to over time share that with this body, how the process is going, what are the outcomes and how are we going to know we met them.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Before the budget process I'd like to have something to the Chair.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Sure.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I want to commend you and one of my favorite Council staffers, who is not on my staff, for getting out to Fernhill Park with a bunch of people and leveraging a lot of different resources, different community groups, different things to clean that up, and I want to ask you, is there going to be a proactive plan in the future for leveraging resources like this?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, I think it goes back to your early point, Councilman. When you know what it is you want to accomplish, then you know who it is you're going to do it with and what are the resources, what are the aligned interests, who are all the partners. So I always struggle when I am sort of in a position sort of as a public administrator. I think they have to struggle for what is the product, how do we communicate that, how do we engage people, staff and others, in delivering that product and how do we measure success. When you can do that, then your relationships and who you work with become very clear. And then that's really when I found anyway new resources come into play, new connections come into play, greater connection and contact with community.

So I think that the challenge for both departments at this moment is to answer that question that you asked me just a minute ago and then to proceed with the structure and the budget and the relationships and the collaborations from there.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

We talked during last year's budget hearings about the need for the Park to implement a modern asset management system. There are members of the Commission that have been pushing this strongly for the last couple of years, and last year you testified that you had an interim rudimentary database and that you were going to be changing that. Where are you with that?

MR. FOCHT: We're still working with the interim database. The funding for the -- to move into a larger -- to do the function services requirement for the larger asset management system was contained in the two and a half million dollar increase which we had received and then was part of the budget rebalancing. So we don't have the funding in Class 200 to take on the larger study. So we continue to manage what we do with paper forms, Excel spreadsheets and this database.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Have you looked at commercial off-the-shelf property management systems?

MR. FOCHT: We have. We've actually been looking specifically for our street tree, which is the largest component of our asset management, managing all of our street tree work, at some commercial software that some other cities have been using. You still need the money to purchase that software and to have the annual license, which can run well into the six figures, and it's simply funding we don't have right now.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I would suggest that there are property management systems that other people use that would cost you far less than $50,000 a year and also have the ability to GPS -- take GPS data, which you could use for your street tree program, and that you ought to maybe go back to Allan Frank, talk to him about this, and also maybe combine your efforts with the RDA, which is also putting together a property asset management database. They've -- not this Administration, but millions have been wasted on a proprietary system, and hopefully they'll be soon considering going to a commercial off-the-shelf system as well. And the City itself, Public Property, has assets that we don't manage in anything but rudimentary databases. So maybe by combining the Class 200 funds of three departments we can actually accomplish something rather than having each department trying to create its own solution.

I would like to know -- next year hopefully we won't be talking about a rudimentary database. I certainly will be judging your success over this past year by whether or not you have got a property management system.

You testified that if Plan B was implemented, the Park would eliminate 92,000 in Class 200 funds for functional requirements contracts for the asset management system.

(Bell rung.)

MR. FOCHT: Correct. That's what we were just discussing.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So we're continuing to spend money on the rudimentary system or is this on a new system?

MR. FOCHT: This is on the new system we were just discussing. The functional requirements contract is the first phase to determining the extent of the system to be purchased in your case or developed.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You could pay for a commercial off-the-shelf system for the amount of money we're talking about here, $92,000.

Who is doing the functional requirements? Are you hiring a consultant for that?

MR. FOCHT: That's what I'm saying. We are not moving ahead on that because we don't have the funding to implement the system. About ten years --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, you do in the original plan. Only if Plan B comes will you not spend this.

MR. FOCHT: No, Councilman. We have the money to do the functional requirements, but we don't have the money to implement the system and --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Can you --

MR. FOCHT: If I may, about ten years ago, we did a functional requirements contract that defined what type of system we should have, and then we never received the money to actually purchase the system to manage our assets. So we don't want to spend the money doing the functional services requirement --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You should never spend money doing. It is a waste of money. It is a boondoggle for departments to do this. There's commercial software that does it. It is very simple. Issue a request for information to the private sector, tell them what your needs are, and you will get 15 proposals from 15 different softwares from all over this country that are going to tell you that you can pay for what you're looking for for less than $92,000. There's no need to do a study. You know what you need.

Who is getting that consulting contract? Have you done an RFP for it?

MR. FOCHT: No. I'm saying, we have not done an RFP for that. We have not started any process to expend those funds.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. My time is up, Madam Chair. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam President.

My colleague, Bill Green, asked how you measure success from one year to

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the next, and I would only weigh in to say that I measure it in part by the minority participation that you brought before us. I measure it in part by the number of permits that I hear are increasing every year for use of Park facilities. I measure it by simple things like the grass being cut on a regular basis. I measure it by the number of suburbanites that now want to participate in joint ventures with the City of Philadelphia on the Manayunk Bridge and how we connect suburbs to urbs. And so I believe that we are making progress. Sometimes baby steps, sometimes giant steps, but we are making progress, and I look forward to measuring it every year as we go forward.

I would also want to know in that regard that early on we talked about the growing problem of events being on the Parkway between the Art Museum and the impact it has on a lot of the museums. I believe a figure of 30 weekends a year we shut down the Parkway, which stops vehicular traffic from getting to some of those institutions, and I wanted to know in your planning, are you moving some of those events to other locations inclusive of the Concourse and Centennial areas in my district, and, if so, how do you blend that and how do you make that logistically make sense?

MR. FOCHT: Thank you, Councilman. I would like to address the often cited 30 weekends a year, because that's actually not an accurate number, and we will supply to the Council President the list of the weekends that are programmed for 2009. Because we frequently hear that and it actually has not been 30 weekends in many years, because we've been very cognizant. I will tell you that in the last ten years, we have only permitted three new events on the Parkway, because we're very cognizant of the impact of those events on our partners.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So that's a total of?

MR. FOCHT: It's about 16 days, so it could be a Saturday or a Sunday and sometimes it's a Saturday and a Sunday, so that's one weekend. About 16 days in the year.

I sit on the Board of Parkway Council Foundation. Of all the institutions on the Parkway, that is a frequent point of conversation. So we'll get you updated numbers on those.

But to the second portion of your question, yes, we have been -- everyone that comes to Fairmount Park that wants to do a first-time special event wants to do it on the Parkway, because it is the quintessential Philadelphia setting. Everyone wants a backdrop of the Art Museum and City Hall. We steer all first-time special events away from the Parkway, largely because they're not large enough to justify going on the Parkway. And if they're not specific to a Parkway institution -- for example, one of the three new events on the Parkway in the last ten years is in fact the Free Library's Book Festival, which happened last weekend for the third year. So that's obviously appropriate to be on the Parkway -- (continued) we direct them to a number of places. We've been directing some athletic-focused events up to Pennypack on the Delaware in Pennypack in the Northeast. Most of our benefit walks and runs we've been redirecting to Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, since that's closed for recreational activity anyway on Saturdays and Sundays, and into the Centennial District in West Park. And in the Centennial District, we've developed a new five kilometer course that does not impact the operations of Please Touch, and, in fact, just last night I got an e-mail from the Director of Operations at Please Touch praising Park staff for this past weekend, beautiful weekend, lots of folks, lots of activities in the Park, and Please Touch was able to open and function while still special events occurred on their front door.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I would like to follow that up with are we still anticipating the approximate $45 million from the federal government for that particular area, and how does that impact specific projects that may be identified in that area? And one near and dear to me would be Centennial Lake and Concourse Lakes, which are the first concrete-bedded manmade lakes in the country, which hasn't seen a dredging in 20 years. So I'm saying all this not for you, because you already know where they are. I'm saying it for future purposes, and that wouldn't those lakes be a wonderful outdoor environmental classroom for kids and wouldn't those lakes be a wonderful urban fishing experience for youth from around the City to take a pole to be right in an urban environment, actually catch a trout or something like that? And these aren't really expensive kinds of capital improvements. These are -- and if we're talking about all of this prosperity in a one-mile area, we can't just leapfrog over those two lakes. So I wanted to know what the status of those projects were.

MR. FOCHT: The Centennial District Authorization Act, which died in the last Congress with the election, has been reintroduced by Congressman Fattah. It's been reintroduced in the House. It is to be reintroduced this week in the Senate by Senator Casey. Both Senator Casey and Congressman Fattah are very positive on its future passage. They're both committed to working on it.

As you're aware, Councilman, that's an authorization act that does not give us money, but that gives us the right to apply through the National Park Service in the federal authorization process for money.

So the authorization process is moving very well. Separately, though, on the lakes, we have worked -- Joan Blaustein on my staff, Director of Environmental Resources for the Park, has worked with the Water Department on a dredging plan that we'll be implementing late summer, early fall to dredge Concourse Lake.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm excited. And are the red-bellied turtles -- I learned about them.

MR. FOCHT: You have lots of them in your district.

COUNCILMAN JONES: The red-bellied turtles, are they going to be okay?

MR. FOCHT: They'll be good. In fact, the dredging plan -- and we've encountered them both on the Manayunk Canal and at the lake. So they're all over your district. They will be -- the dredging plan is around -- separate from the mating season for the red-bellied turtles so we don't disturb their habitat during their critical spring season. That's why the dredging is summer, early fall.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Just one other comment on that. Within the Concourse Lake, there is a little island and one of the things that I thought that Commissioner DiBerardinis would appreciate is that there are 80 different species of hardwood which are indigenous to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It would be nice to be able to have those species represented on that island and markers, placards or signage be able to have young people identify the difference between an oak and the difference between pine and know those kinds of species as a part of their outdoor experience.

Thank you, Madam President -- or Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

I would be very remiss to let these hearings go this year and not acknowledge the work of Bob Allen, who worked very, very, very, very, very closely over a long extended period of time with Councilman Clarke and I as we looked to see how we could find efficiencies long before the issue went before the voters, and this was the earliest time since then that I've had a chance to make that acknowledgment.

I'm pleased to hear not that the number of events have been reduced, but to know exactly what the number is, number one.

Number two, there may be a role for us to help in getting the word out that the events are on the Parkway so that citizens and visitors alike can rearrange their lives when it comes to the traffic issues that we have to confront on the Parkway. So is that a consideration when -- what is your strategy for getting the word out that, A, they're happening and, B, you need to be aware of this because lives have to be moved around because of the traffic issues?

MR. FOCHT: All of the information on events on both King Drive, Kelly Drive and the Parkway are posted on our website, right on the home page at fairmountpark.org. There's a link to the complete event listings for all three and the hours of either closure or detour, depending on the situation. So that's publicly posted mid-March every year. So that's there for the whole event season, updated as need be. And then specifically on the Parkway, we actually work fairly extensively with the Parkway Council Foundation. We use that organization as the vehicle to get out to the CEOs of the leadership of each, and as recently as yesterday, I was corresponding with the leadership at the Philadelphia Condominium right on the Parkway. They had a question about one specific special event. But all the information for all three venues, King, Kelly and the Parkway, are posted right on our home page.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Is there some connection with the neighborhood residents for the --

MR. FOCHT: Logan Square neighbors and the Fairmount Civic Association both, yes. They both receive all these lists.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Give us an update on Dell East just for this record.

MR. FOCHT: That's actually a Recreation Department facility, so Commissioner Slawson will be able to --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I just read that. I should know that.

MR. FOCHT: That's okay.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I believe

that that's it, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Real quick, I just want to briefly kind of -- some earlier conversations around the basis/purpose, the intent on the merger as a co-sponsor of the bill, along with Councilwoman Brown, I just wanted to say one of the issues that came up in that discussion was in fact the realization of potential cost savings, and I want to say that there were actually a significant amount of cost savings realized during the course of the operational mergers that did not require any legislation, and hopefully that more than pays for Commissioner DiBerardinis' salary. I think we're okay in the Five-Year Plan also with respect to that.

But there were actually a number of other issues that I think were if not equally, maybe even more important. This whole issue of transparency in terms of the selection process was very high up as it related to how we select the Commissioners of the newly formed entity, and as earlier referenced by the Commissioner, that caused more people to apply for the Commission of Parks and Recreation I think more than any other commission in the City of Philadelphia has ever, and the qualifications of those people caused us to try to come up with a strategy to figure out how we keep those people engaged. So I say if nothing else, it achieved that goal of getting people engaged in the parks.

The other issue related to the level of responsibility, because at the end of the day, during the course of the old park system, in particular it was never clear who was responsible and who had jurisdiction over the Park. It was an issue about Park Commissioners at the end of the day, and I know, Mark, you won't say it today, but, frankly speaking, the lines of communication as to who was your supervisor was quite difficult, because you'd get calls from the Park Commissioners, and there were a number of them. You'd get calls from Councilmembers and you'd get calls from state reps and you'd get calls from friends groups, and at the end of the day, it's like who did you really answer to. I think this sets up the lines of responsibility quite clearly. And then this whole issue about funding.

(Bell rung.)

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And I'll wrap up. It was never really clear at end of the day from the general public who was responsible for funding the Park, because it's kind of -- and I don't think that the elected officials were pressured enough to fund parks in the appropriate way because of that whole confusion around funding. So this pretty much set it quite clear who is responsible, who has jurisdiction over what, and has a significant transparency issue as it relates to making sure that those people who make those decisions.

And one last thing. With respect to the newly formed Commission, I think that newly formed Commission will give us a clear vision on Park policy. Unlike before, there was kind of every time you had a Park meeting, depending on what committee that the issue went to, the kind of -- and I'm not being critical of the former Park Commissioners, because they were really hard-working people, but there was no real guidelines as it relates to Park disposition, acquisition, watershed management, things of those nature, and I believe that this newly formed Commission will clearly establish those guidelines for us to enact in the City of Philadelphia.

So I just wanted to just put that out there as one of the sponsors why we did what we did, and I'm sure Councilwoman will probably add some things when her turn comes up.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman O'Neill.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Commissioner, welcome back.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thanks.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Good to have you, and I think we're fortunate that what would have been in an RFP nationally and may not have existed other than your unique combination of city and state, not just having the jobs, but having excelled at both of them is our good fortune. So welcome back. And I just wanted to ask you, as I was sitting here listening to the talk about consolidation, one of the major things I remember as reasons that the Parks Alliance and others wanted the consolidation, wanted a change in governance was that the -- what was at that time the new Park Commission that came after some reform that people thought was going to happen, new people were put on, there was sort of a citywide movement, including the Alliance, to get new blood in the Commission. They did a strategic plan. The Commission engaged a strategic plan and then didn't follow it. At least that's what I remember. And one of the things was, there were key areas they didn't follow, and I've sat next to my colleague, Councilman Clarke, who told me he moved into a new area a few years back in Northwood and he has a three-block park, except it looks like a park, it acts like a park, but it's the

Department of Recreation. And then there's examples of that elsewhere, but I just remember that one conversation, because it was frustrating. And then we have rec centers that look like rec centers, but they're Fairmount Park facilities. And it seemed like one of the simplest things that would help citizens and help the government and let people know if it's Fairmount Park, if it's a rec center, it never got done, for whatever reason. Is there a chance we can see that under the new consolidation?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes. We have to do that. I mean, that's where those programmatic or structural alliances are. We have to do that quick and early. I mean, that has to be something we get right, and, in fact, I think that will be one of the easier tasks --

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- in the process. But certainly that has to happen.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: And then the management has to -- we have to improve the quality of the services and the management as we identify them as a responsibility of the single entity.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Is that strategic plan still relevant to the new consolidated --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I'd have to defer to Mark on that.

MR. FOCHT: Yes, Councilman. The strategic plan done in 2005 had, again, 82 major recommendations. About 41 of them have been implemented, have been completed or in progress, and it was a ten-year plan. And one of the recommendations in that plan was this possible merger with Recreation. So the process that the Commissioner is about to lead us through is actually continuing the implementation of that strategic plan, which does address the issues you raise about the transfer of facilities and land.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Okay. Well, thank you very much, both of you. Good luck.

MR. FOCHT: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

Moving along. Let me just announce that we are not going to take a break. We are going to continue on with the hearing. After Fairmount Park we will have Recreation Department, the Atwater Kent and then the Art Museum. So thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

So if you could just, Mr. Focht, if you could provide the Chair with the functional requirements that were discovered that you needed ten years ago. Because I can't imagine they've changed.

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So the operating budget summary indicates a 37.5 percent reduction from 320 to 200 between FY09 and FY10 and other revenues to Fairmount Park. What are these other revenues?

MR. FOCHT: I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And why are they dropping?

MR. FOCHT: I'm sorry, Councilman. Could you repeat again, please.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Budget summary, Page 14, there's a 37 and a half percent reduction in, quote/unquote, "other revenues" to the Park. Why are they dropping and what are they?

If you don't have the answer now, you can provide it to the Chair.

MR. FOCHT: We will.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: In your testimony you noted that if Plan B was implemented, the Park would generate additional revenue amounting to 83,550. Park staff would work to identify additional revenue-generating opportunities which would also ideally provide amenities for park users.

I appreciate that the Park staff is stretched thin, but why would we wait for Plan B?

MR. FOCHT: Well, as I said in my testimony, we're not waiting for Plan B. At the top of Page 2 of my testimony, I said that we are pursuing additional revenue-generating, on the third paragraph on Page 2, additional revenue-generating opportunities such as the food and vending, the professional -- the parking, the organic material. We're doing all that now.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right, but your --

MR. FOCHT: To within the capacity of the staff we have, which is one and a half people to administer all the contracts and agreements in Fairmount Park. If Plan B is implemented -- we're already taking it to a certain level, pushing ourselves. If Plan B is implemented, we'd simply have to push ourselves further. I don't know the details of how we'll accomplish that right now.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: But what you're testifying to is, you can generate an additional $83,550 and you're not going to do it unless Plan B is needed. It doesn't make sense to me. I mean, you should be able to do it, and the way maybe we can motivate you to generate the additional $83,550 is to appropriate you $83,550 less and then maybe the motivation will be there to get that done.

MR. FOCHT: I understand.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I mean, you say you can do it. I'm going to take you at your word.

I have more questions, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I think you have a couple more minutes. I didn't set the clock right. About three minutes, I think.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

The Majority Leader of this Council has tasked me with finding $25 to $50 million in savings in different departments, so I'm working on it.

Okay. So you're going from 158 people to 171 people, or another way to describe what's happening when you look at the two departments is that there's a 2.5 million increase in Class 100 funding from FY10 to '11 in the Five-Year Plan, and then the Recreation Department is going down 1.3 million in Class 100 funding. So essentially there's a net increase of 1.2 million overall. How were those decisions made?

MR. FOCHT: Let me, if I may --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Can you talk about that in context or do we need Mr. DiBerardinis?

MR. FOCHT: Well, if I could address your first comment, the 158 and the 171. The 158 is the number of filled funded positions as of the date the budget was submitted. We are actually funded for 170 positions, so we're 18 positions -- excuse me; 12 positions unfunded -- excuse me; 12 positions funded but unfilled as of the date of when this budget was submitted. So we're not -- we're increasing the staff at Fairmount Park for next fiscal year by one position, from 170 to 171.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right, but if you're getting by with 158 people now in this budget crisis, the way I would look at that is that you're spending money for 13 positions that currently aren't filled and I haven't seen any sort of disastrous impact on citizens, when our other alternatives, like tax increases and other things, are far more severe. I think people want us to run government as efficiently as possible. So what would be the impact if you weren't able to hire those 13 people until 2011?

MR. FOCHT: Continued deterioration of the assets that we have. Some of those positions, as I've said several times so far this morning, are all of our front-line personnel, our skilled trades, the fact that we have 460 structures in Fairmount Park and have one or two roofers. We simply don't have enough staff and we historically have not had enough staff to sustain the assets that we're charged with sustaining.

(Bell rung.)

MR. FOCHT: And as I believe most folks are aware, if we don't make a maintenance investment in those assets, they become larger and more burdensome on the Capital Budget, because eventually they pass from Operating to Capital for -- if a roof falls in, it becomes a capital issue, not a maintenance issue.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure. So if we appropriate the money for these positions, how much will you save in terms of maintenance in capital costs?

MR. FOCHT: Well, we'd be catching up on our backlog. We have about $70 million in deferred maintenance on our facilities that's a substantial backlog to catch up on. That would be done -- we would begin to chip away at it with these employees.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So --

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Time's up.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Sometimes when we start to compare the federal government's edict to stimulate economic development and then our own local burden of deficits, they're at cross purposes. We say, Let's get shovel-ready projects ready to go, and you tell me you have $70 million worth, but for 13 people, we could be actually shovel-ready seems to me that we should hire those 13 people and start to do those projects to start to preserve our assets and not put ourselves in a situation where we're looking at valuable mansions, valuable historic mansions, that can't be replaced, and they are Philadelphia treasures. But I'll save that for another time.

What I'd like to focus on in my time is to talk about as we start to look at that museum connection to the Schuylkill, connection to the Centennial District connection, are we considering alternate forms of transportation such as trains, such as some type of shuttle buses, and dare I even say some petty cabs? Would that be the kind of thing that might be useful along those particular stretches of park?

MR. FOCHT: Yes, Councilman, they would be beneficial. Our colleagues in the Centennial District, Please Touch and -- particularly Please Touch and the Zoo, have worked extensively this season or over the winter with the Center City District and SEPTA to expand the Phlash route. So the seasonal Phlash route when it starts on May 1st will, for the first time, go to the Zoo and Please Touch out in the Centennial District to provide that tourist connection.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So how far west will they go?

MR. FOCHT: They'll go to -- on the regular route, they'll go to Please Touch and then on Mann events, they'll go to the Mann and then they'll loop back in down the Parkway.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So will they hit the Horticultural Center, Japanese House, Ohio House?

MR. FOCHT: Not directly, no.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Couldn't we look at the possibility of extending it to them? Because those are valuable institutions out there as well.

MR. FOCHT: Absolutely, yes.

COUNCILMAN JONES: And take a

look at how and whether or not it would warrant doing so if the demand could be increased by people knowing coming into the City of Philadelphia and there's a piece of material on promotions that I can go out to the Horticultural Society or the Japanese House and those things are available to me through that mode of transportation.

The other thing is, I heard about the trains. Is that a train that would be a part of a loop that would go that far west?

MR. FOCHT: I know there's been some discussion amongst the Mann and Please Touch with SEPTA about reopening the SEPTA Regional Rail stop at 52nd Street right there at the commercial development. I've not been part of those conversations. I don't know their status.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. Let me shift gears real quick with the time allotted. Can you tell me what your goals are for street tree pruning, planting? And particularly, last year you talked about changing up on the types of species based on disease prevention plans you had. Could you touch on that a little bit?

MR. FOCHT: Sure. We're constantly reviewing -- the professional arborists at Fairmount Park are constantly reviewing the list of accepted street trees, staying on top of arboriculture practices, and if there's a particular blight on a particular species, we'll remove it from the list so that we're not planting that species and propagating that blight. So that's a constant process we go through. It's constantly evaluated. And the approved street tree list is again available on our website at fairmountpark.org.

Specifically to your question about -- I can give you some numbers as far as tree planting. This past fall we planted 1,166 trees. This spring we'll be planting 415 more. So that's about 1,600 trees planted in the two seasons. That's a substantial uptick last fall because we had a portion of the million dollars in additional money that we spent before the budget rebalancing.

We currently have about 5,007, to be exact, 5,007 prunings scheduled for the remainder of the fiscal year between now and June 30th and 1,656 removals scheduled between now and the end of the fiscal year.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Finally, as the Water Department moves forward on its plan to institute what are called rain gardens to deal with rainwater runoff, is there any collaboration, cooperation between Fairmount Park and the Water Department to install, maintain these types of rain gardens?

(Bell rung.)

MR. FOCHT: Yes. Actually, very extensive cooperation. We're working on several projects together on both our capital budgets and grant funding to do innovative storm water management and storm water treatment on Fairmount Park land, and also the Philadelphia Water Department is now funding the Park's environmental education staff, six full-time employees that are really now focused on advancing the Water Department's mission and message to the public about storm water management and combined sewer overflows and the things that have been discussed in this Council.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So my further question would be, is that a cottage industry about to blossom in Philadelphia, rain garden maintenance, installation and that kind of stuff, and, if so, how are we preparing for the job growth in that regard and kind of a feeder track into that profession, which is not a profession of the future, but a profession that we need to get ready for right now?

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MR. FOCHT: I'm aware of several partnerships, one being with the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society and the Water Department around both the implementation of rainwater infiltration gardens on vacant lots throughout the City and then working with community groups to provide job training for that green skill set to maintain those sites through grants from the Water Department or PHS. There's great potential.

COUNCILMAN JONES: And I'm going to end now, but by way of -- my only concern about a rain garden, are we looking at mosquitos, West Nile, things like that? Because obviously that moisture area is probably a breeding ground for that kind of insect, and are we thinking ahead of the curve on how to prevent that?

MR. FOCHT: Yes, absolutely. There's two ways to address that. One is the type of vegetation you put in the infiltration bed or the rain garden, and the other idea is to keep in mind that these rain gardens are really about getting rainwater into the ground, not having it be standing water. Standing water is what breeds mosquitoes and then, by your inference, West Nile. The idea of rain gardens is not to have standing water. It's the exact opposite of that. It's to get the water into the ground through the root systems of the plant material to get that water back into the water table.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

MR. FOCHT: So in most rain gardens, you will not see standing water. You won't see rain in a rain garden.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I count on you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,

Madam Chair.

Good morning again. A couple of quick questions. One, in terms of truck traffic, is that prohibited in the Park?

MR. FOCHT: On most roads in Fairmount Park it's prohibited, except for those that are state highways, like Belmont Avenue in West Park. So there are specific roads that truck traffic is allowed or bus traffic, like SEPTA buses. Most roads -- Kelly Drive, it's prohibited.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Because Kelly Drive and Martin Luther King Drive --

MR. FOCHT: Both prohibited.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: -- because I frequent those considerably, there are so many trucks traveling down those roads and one actually there's not - I don't think there's adequate signage, because it's basically just a sign at the beginning of Kelly Drive that's near the

Parkway. But how do we enforce that? Because it is like to the point of getting ridiculous, and the problem with these trucks, these people, they like use it -- I mean, most people in cars use it like the Indianapolis 500, but when a truck is traveling that fast, it is really -- it makes it very difficult to navigate with the curves.

Is there a way that we can either increase the signage or talk to somebody about enforcement? And I know now with the closure of the 92nd Police District, we don't have a dedicated police department for the Park.

MR. FOCHT: Right. Correct.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Can you look into that?

MR. FOCHT: Sure. We can certainly look into the signage. The enforcement of the responsibility is the police. It had been the 92nd. It's now the Traffic Division of the Police Department, and we periodically, back when it was the 92nd, we would periodically meet with them and remind them --

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I think it's like maybe a two-week period aggressive enforcement on truck traffic will probably send a signal.

MR. FOCHT: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Point of information, please, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Point of information.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I think in all fairness for the record, Director, you've got to define what a truck is. It's a very loose definition. It's a pretty -- trucks are allowed on Kelly and Martin Luther King, but it's a certain gross vehicle weight, and I think that I saw it's pretty -- it's a fairly sized truck that is allowed.

MR. FOCHT: It's actually defined, Councilman, as commercial vehicles. So a pick-up truck that is a commercial landscape contractor or a residential contractor is actually not allowed on Kelly or King or Lincoln Drive. It's not related to the size of the vehicle. It's related to the use of the vehicle. The signage is specifically posted "no commercial vehicles."

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But a truck with no language on it, no writing or a box truck is allowed. Because I talked to a traffic officer that told me he cannot enforce truck traffic on Kelly and Lincoln Drive because of the fact there are certain trucks that are allowed. So I don't want to take Councilman Clarke's time, but I think we really need to get a real definition of what a truck is.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You already did.

MR. FOCHT: Again, that's not our understanding of the regulation. We'll confirm that with the police. Clearly, obviously City vehicles, a box truck for Fairmount Park or Water

Department vehicle is clearly allowed. So that's why it's defined as commercial, not by the weight or the type of vehicle. We'll certainly confirm that with the police.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And if it says "truck" on the tag, that doesn't matter?

MR. FOCHT: It depends on its use literally.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So it's not truck; it's more the commercial use?

MR. FOCHT: Correct, commercial use.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Is that something that's governed by Park regs or City regs?

MR. FOCHT: By both, actually. It's ensconced within the Fairmount Park regulations going back decades, but the enforcement authority, the definition of a commercial vehicle doesn't rest with the Park Commission. It rests with the police and the state, and then the enforcement is through the Philadelphia Police.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So wait a minute. Let me understand this. The policy with respect to Fairmount Park determines where you can and cannot have these type of vehicles, but the type of vehicles are -- the actual type of vehicle that is prohibited is designated by state regs?

MR. FOCHT: Yes, the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. Parking on the grass, 33rd Street, I go through this every year.

MR. FOCHT: Prohibited.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And nobody -- I mean, I lived on 33rd Street for ten years, and I understand the need to -- when you picnic, you want to have your car as close as possible, but it is out of control. Folks picnic along 33rd Street and they think the car has to be next to the picnic table, and then that one person sees the car, so everybody, Oh, I want my car to be next to the picnic. So there's like a virtual parking lot on the grass along 33rd and other places in the Park. Again, who enforces that?

MR. FOCHT: It can either be the police or the Fairmount Park Rangers. It's very frustrating to us. I mean, we dispatch the Rangers, particularly during busy seasons, this past weekend when it was beautiful in the Park. They're patrolling East and West Park, Pennypack, Wissahickon, the big parks. They will regularly write citations for people parking on the grass. Unfortunately, most of the reactions that the Rangers get are not welcoming and friendly, but they will regularly cite folks for parking on the grass. And the Philadelphia Police can, too. Obviously our Rangers are focused just on the Park.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Are we going to -- and I know because I've been talking to you about this for a while. Are we going to have like a renewed effort on some of these enforcement issues since the Park is now in terms of level of interest --

MR. FOCHT: Sure. We will certainly do that.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Because it's like ridiculous.

MR. FOCHT: The way we've also -- at some locations, the way to keep it from happening is to put up physical barricades, guide rails, large boulders. We don't want to do that. That's a capital cost, a maintenance cost. It really has to be through enforcement and education. It's just on a particularly nice day it can be a real tough audience out there.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yeah, I know.

One last thing. I guess this is a general question with respect to marketing.

(Bell rung.)

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: One of the concerns that I've always had about the Park is that we didn't adequately market our Park, and I bring that whole thing about everybody knows where Central Park is, but if I'm five miles outside of Philadelphia, nobody knows where Fairmount Park is, but yet Fairmount Park is significantly larger than Central Park.

As we move forward as a part of this merger process, are we going to develop a broader strategy as it relates to marketing our parks in a way that will increase usage, particularly relating to tourism? And I know we have the one park trolley that kind of goes to a couple of historical houses, but beyond that, we really don't promote it in a way that enhances our tours, because I think, as I said earlier in the earlier hearing, I talked about taking the third markets, the Old City model where the people put the earphones, they have like narrated tours of the Wissahickon and things like that that are relatively low cost, but I think are --

MR. FOCHT: Yeah, if I could address that. Two things. The Fairmount Park Conservancy, our non-profit partner, has received some funding and has just retained a marketing firm to look at the overall umbrella imaging of Fairmount Park, how it fits in with the merged department and what are the assets that we want to promote in the way you just mentioned.

And, second, we have a grant from the federal government to do an audio tour that you mentioned specifically. This is specifically initially for the sculptures along the Parkway and out into East and West Park. We also got money to do interpretive signage for all the sculptures, and it's going to be a digital audio tour that you can call in on your cell phone and take that tour. So we're just -- we have both those grants. We're in the process of developing that content right now.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Good. Good. Good. I'm going to sneak in one last one since the point of order took a little bit of my time.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I gave you extra time.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You gave me extra time? All right.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Finish up. Are you coming back for another round?

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Are you going to be back for another round?

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: No, I'm actually not.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Go ahead.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Real briefly, I just want to say as it relates to this merger process, are we going to set up a mechanism to be proactive in involving the various communities since it's now beyond just Parks, it's Rec?

Commissioner, if you can kind of just briefly tell me about if you have some idea, and I know you've only been on the job nine days, but I know you've been thinking about your study.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I've been thinking about it, yeah. I actually think that the engagement that you talked about is imperative for the success of the merger. If we don't take the time to listen to the people who volunteer their time, who live near the Park, who use the Park regularly, the same goes for the Recreation Department who are involved in the advisory council and athletic associations, who raise money in support of the programs, if we can't -- we have to spend the time to listen and to take that information about their hopes and their desires and their needs relative to the merger, we're not going to succeed. So we have a very aggressive timetable that we put together from now until late October, mid-November to talk to citizens directly, to take that input and information seriously and to use it to develop this plan. And it may sound like, Well, what do they know? They know a lot. They know what their problems are and they know what they need. So we have to respond to that. They may not understand the policy or the budget or sort of the operational questions, but we need to respond to that and put their needs into those bigger policy, operational budget questions.

So we hope to share that with you in some pretty short order. We're working on it right now. We're already meeting with the staff of both agencies to plot out the course, and I'd say within weeks we should be able to talk more clearly and more directly with you about that.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

I appreciate your whole philosophy of inclusion and early inclusion.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: But you've been here before, right?

Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to turn you to Page 28 of the budget detail, Section 49. So this is the section called Building and Construction where you were talking about the need for roofers, et cetera?

MR. FOCHT: Correct.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Could you go to Line 11 and tell me how many roofers are currently as of the increment run budgeted and how many are budgeted for 2010.

MR. FOCHT: Two in the increment run and two are budgeted.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I thought the point you were making was we were adding roofers for the 13 positions.

MR. FOCHT: I used roofer. I apologize. A roofer was not an exact example. It's the type of skill trades that are represented on here. As you see, Carpenter Group Leader II, other positions.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yeah, I see that. So five of the 13 positions are added in the area for deferred maintenance?

MR. FOCHT: Correct, in facilities maintenance.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: In facilities maintenance.

MR. FOCHT: Landscape operations.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. So let's turn to Page 10. Can you tell me what -- I'm sorry; not Page 10. I think the title I'm looking for is Park District Manager. What does a Park District Manager do?

MR. FOCHT: That's in our Landscape and Operations group. The Park is divided into five geographic districts, and a Park District Manager is the top manager in that district. He or she is physically located in that district and runs the operations of that district on a daily basis.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And is that something that is a necessary position in every district? There can't be one manager for landscape operations citywide or two?

MR. FOCHT: Well, again, we feel it's necessary to have a manager on site. This is 64 parks divided into five geographic districts, and we feel it's important to have a manager within a geographic district, such as all of Northeast Philadelphia or all of West Philadelphia, to manage the operations of that district.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So Operations Division administration, can you tell me what the Park District Manager does there?

MR. FOCHT: I'm sorry. What page are you on?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm on Page 20.

MR. FOCHT: And your question again was?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's Line 4.

MR. FOCHT: Right. I'm sorry. Your question is -- we're down one district manager.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, this is the administration level. This is not a specific district. So Line 4 you have Park District Manager, but it appears to be not assigned to any of the five.

MR. FOCHT: Correct. I will get you the exact responsibilities of that position.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You don't

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have it?

MR. FOCHT: I don't recall it.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Do the other district managers report to this person?

MR. FOCHT: No. The other district managers report to the Director of Operations and Landscape Management.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And I notice that there are District Grounds Maintenance Supervisors and there's one at the administrative level.

MR. FOCHT: Mm-hmm.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: What do those people do?

MR. FOCHT: Again, I'll get you their full job descriptions.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Do you feel your division staff are competent, perform their job function well?

MR. FOCHT: I take great pride in the competency and the high-caliber performance of all Fairmount Park staff.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So do you

need another level of bureaucracy above them other than yourself?

MR. FOCHT: I'm not sure I understand your question.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are you --

MR. FOCHT: Everyone that works for Fairmount Park has a role in operating this district, this organization that's responsible for 11 percent of the land in the City of Philadelphia with 170 employees. It's an incredible value for the investment the City makes in --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm not disagreeing with you, Mr. Focht.

MR. FOCHT: I'm just offering that I feel everyone that works for Fairmount Park has a highly valuable role and works very hard on a day-to-day basis to provide to the citizens the very valuable and landscape and parks and recreation that we provide.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm just trying to find money in the budget and it appears to me that there are some positions that are at the division level and then also at the top administrative level and perhaps they're redundant in this environment, is my only suggestion. So if you could get back to me with job descriptions --

MR. FOCHT: We will.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- I would appreciate it. Certainly I would agree that you need the people in Building and Construction in order to maintain our infrastructure.

I think that's it for my questions, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Great.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Well, thank you very much, Councilman.

Councilman O'Neill.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Gentlemen -- and this is

obviously directed more towards Director Focht. The Burholme Park, which got a lot of publicity because of the Cancer Center, is truly a beautiful urban park where there's a large athletic program, sledding hill, picnic pavilion, walking paths, play equipment area. My first term, the Northeast Optimists, which have been there for many years, didn't play there nor did anyone else because the fields were unplayable, and the Northeast Optimists used a very large area where there were two ball fields on Dungan Road behind a corporation that allowed them to be there. A new corporation came in, said, Get off, we have other plans.

They said, We want to use Burholme Park, but it needs to be fixed.

These fields aren't even playable. Pete Hoskins and Bill Mifflin were young guys at that time. They said, Look, you've got problems with your fields. We've got a park that is fairly useless and run down and not very presentable. So they said, We'll design your stuff if you can help us with your capital budget and help us with our stuff. And parking all over the place was one of the problems they had, couldn't grow grass, trees that were dead, things with the museum, the perimeter of the museum, and at that time, probably a little under $400,000 seemed like 4 million. But we planted hundreds of trees, took out hundreds of trees, but one of the things they did and they recommended -- I think it was the first time Fairmount Park ever did this -- they put in a ten-foot -- a ten-inch curb around the entire facility where the roads are to accomplish two things. One, it has kept cars off there for more than 25 years, and your equipment is able to use it as a guide, your cutting equipment, and it just cuts right up to the curb. I don't know if it will work anywhere else, but that has worked magic for a long time at Burholme

Park.

And while I'm on the subject of Burholme Park -- that was just sort of reference to Councilman Clarke's issue. The Northeast Optimists occupies, volunteers that facility a good portion of the time. There's a road, Park Road Drive, that comes in off of Cottman Avenue and they have asked repeatedly, I've asked repeatedly could you make it one way in. Because there's all kinds of accidents that occur, particularly with visiting teams coming, not knowing the local customs of just getting out in the street and waiting to get hit kind of. And it seems like that's an intractable problem with the current commission form of government that we have, because I can -- I'm advisory, and so are they. But I was just up there again on Saturday and watching a real mess out on the street.

When does the consolidation occur for the purpose that that will be under the City with nothing in between, like the Park Commission saying, Well, we control that road, unlike other situations? When does that end and when does it all become the same?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I'm not sure what we'd do in this particular situation, but --

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: I hope we don't have to wait until then, but it's a really easy solution. There's two other ways out.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I think the legislation, if you go strictly by the legislation, it's July 1st of 2010.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: That's when there has to be a fully formed single agency that's operational. Now, I suspect, and my hope is, we'll be operating before then --

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: --

in some significant way. But if you have to know the drop-dead date, it's July 1st of the next calendar year.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Okay. Because it's a public safety issue as well as a park issue. There are two other ways out of that park if you come in off of Cottman only, and maybe this is the right time, as we're preparing and gearing up for this, to take another look at that, because we're going to be doing it eventually. I hate to see something happen that we could have prevented.

Thank you.

MR. FOCHT: Certainly.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you so very much for your testimony and we appreciate your being here and listening to it.

Welcome back, Mike. It's good to see you.

MR. FOCHT: Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: We'll now call on the Recreation Department to come forward. I think they're next.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Madam Chair, could you bring for just one minute the Fairmount Park back. We have some information to provide them for the record.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Mr. Focht, Councilman Rizzo has some information for you for the record.

Don't leave, Rec Department. Just sit on the side.

Come back, Commissioner.

What is this in reference to?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: We just want to make sure for the record that we get this regulation correct on trucks, and, Director, you can read the note from the Streets Department in reference to Fairmount Park. Could you comment on that?

MR. FOCHT: Yes. This is an

e-mail, I guess, to the Councilman from Mark Washington, the Streets Department. It says in the highlighted area, it says, In reference to the prohibition of trucks on Fairmount Park roadways, the regulation is tied to trucks in which their gross weight is over 23,000 pounds.

Again, we'll confirm this, Councilman. I think it's the difference between trucks and commercial vehicles, because commercial vehicles are what are banned on Fairmount Park roads.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But the signs, don't they say trucks?

MR. FOCHT: No. They say commercial vehicles.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So a truck under 23,000 pounds can negotiate Fairmount Park roadways?

MR. FOCHT: No. If it's a commercial vehicle, it's banned from Fairmount Park roadways.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Really, I think I have to go look at the signs again, because like my colleague, we see a tremendous amount of truck traffic on those roadways and I think there's some confusion.

MR. FOCHT: I understand. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: You're welcome.

We now call on the Recreation Department.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon and welcome.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Good afternoon.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Kindly identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Good afternoon, Council President Verna, members of City Council. My name is Susan Slawson, Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia Department of Recreation. I would like to introduce my executive management staff. To my left is Leo Dignam, Deputy Commissioner for Programs. To my right is Marissa Washington, Deputy Commissioner for Administration, and sitting in the back with the new Park and Rec Commissioner is Michael Johnson, the Deputy Commissioner for Operations.

Given the economic conditions we're facing, I believe the Mayor's proposed budget allows us to maintain our vital role in the City by focusing on our core services that support youth and families, engage communities and create partnerships today and into the future. In November of 2008 when we made the initial budget reductions due to the economic crisis, the Department closed the following: Three of the five ice rinks we operate, four of the eight indoor pools. We also reduced the number of seasonal maintenance attendant positions and a number of seasonal staff that would service our pools, and vacant and full-time positions. This budget we present today will assist in serving and supporting the citizens of Philadelphia as we navigate through difficult times.

The Recreation Department is requesting -- this is for our William Camp Fund. As we know, I sat before you a few months ago for the sale of William Penn, but one of the things that I talked about during that testimony was that we would ensure that we maintain additional funding to ensure that our young people had summer camp opportunities to go overnight and stay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is that being sold? Do we have a prospective buyer? What is the status of the sale?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: The

state has a 180-day due diligence, President Verna, and they're in that 180 due diligence phase right now. Settlement has not yet occurred, but it's expected to take place sometime in the fall.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. I didn't mean to interrupt your testimony.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That's okay.

The Recreation Department is requesting 100,000 in General Fund appropriations for Fiscal Year 2010 for Camp William Penn.

Although Camp William Penn will not be open and will not be operational, the Department of Recreation requests the appropriations be used to contract with Outward Bound Philadelphia and the Salvation Army to provide camping experiences for youth. Campers will participate in skill-building activities such as canoeing, climbing, camping and leadership and team work.

The budget request for the Department of Recreation: The Recreation Department is requesting $33,119,244 in the General Fund. The components of the budget are Class 100, which makes up 83.68 percent, and the remaining balance of 16.32 percent are contained in Classes 2, 3, 4 and 500. The General Fund accounts for 81.18 percent of the total Department budget.

In the Grants Revenue Fund, we request 7,676,504, which is 18.82 percent of the total Department budget. The Recreation Department's Grants Revenue Fund appropriation will provide for the Summer Food and After-School Snack Programs, Older Adult Program, Youth Summer Job Training, and Youth and Community Center Development.

The Department of Recreation has long been at the forefront of programming for children and families. We are the largest provider of after-school programs in the City. At the present time, we have 98 active after-school programs that serve approximately 3,000 children daily from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., which is the most vulnerable time for children out of school. This vital service is preserved in the FY10 budget, as well as our Summer Camp Program that will serve over 8,000 youth per day during a six-week period.

These core programs will become even more important to families in the coming year as they seek out affordable, quality programs that will engage children in positive skill-building activities. For the Fiscal Year 2010 budget, the Recreation Department will offer nearly 100 after-school programs, 170 different community and specialty summer day camps, as well as hundreds of our athletic and cultural programs to support the City's youth and families.

Strong playgrounds and recreation centers build a sense of community and safer neighborhoods. A core principle of the Department of Recreation is to maintain a presence of active recreational opportunities and equal access in all Philadelphia neighborhoods. We strive to provide a variety of athletic, cultural and educational programs that will engage individuals from youth to senior citizens so that our facilities are a vibrant and dependable part of every community.

This preferred budget provides the funding for the Department of Recreation to preserve 150 staffed facilities across the City and continue to serve over 600,000 participants in a variety of programs. These programs have a vital impact on healthy and stable neighborhoods. Several new and successful initiatives were created, including the Play Ball Initiative, in which 45 new baseball teams were developed with 675 players who are coached by staff and volunteers at 32 recreation facilities. The Kick It Soccer Initiative provided an opportunity for over 820 children at 28 recreation facilities who might not normally participate in an organized soccer program to join teams in their communities.

This summer, the Department will operate 46 outdoor pools and four indoor pools. The 46 pools were chosen based on access, location, capacity, age and condition. In an effort to minimize the impact of the budget reductions, we began the three-year pool campaign called the Mayor's Splash Fund. We are able to open these pools with increased City funding and public and private donations to the Mayor's Splash Fund. Our goal this summer is to raise $500,000. To date we have raised 414,141 already pledged for this year and an additional 142,000 pledged for Year 2 and Year 3, for the total of $556,141. We will continue this funding drive to support our aquatics program as we move into the future.

The Department of Recreation has proudly taken the lead in creating and sustaining partnerships with community groups, businesses and other organizations. The Play Ball Initiative was sponsored by the Phillies and Pitch In for Baseball, a non-profit organization that donates team uniforms and sports equipment to needy communities. The Kick It Soccer Initiative was supported by a donation from the Philadelphia Parking Authority. The Youth Environmental Stewardship Camp is a partnership between the Department of Recreation and the Philadelphia Horticultural Society. The Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation provided support for three of the Department's ice rinks that were in danger of closing this past year.

With new partnerships, we have been able to develop Operation Clean

Start, a partnership involving Philadelphia area businesses and the community at large to revitalize community recreation centers. A special thank-you is extended to Councilmembers for your support when Operation Clean Start was implemented in your districts. Some of our partners have been City Year, Philadelphia Cares, neighboring university students and neighborhood church groups. The Department continues to address poor lighting, faulty benches and bleachers, inadequate or unsightly fencing, poor or missing signage in our facilities. As a first step in partnership with the Anti-Graffiti Network, the Department of Recreation is working to remove nuisance graffiti in our facilities and outside our buildings. We are continuing our partnership with the Mural Arts Program as well. The Department has also contracted with the Philadelphia Horticultural Society to provide attractive landscaping at 20 playgrounds.

A new partnership with Resources for Human Development, RHD, and Pennsylvania Academic and Career Technical Training Alliance will provide summer apprenticeship opportunities for youth. We are partnering with RHD by participating in job training and work apprenticeship programs. This project will meet two critical needs at once. It will afford the opportunity to help at-risk youth in Philadelphia and provide us with a workforce who will be trained in the very skills required to maintain recreation facilities.

The Department of Recreation understands that the implementation of the above budget depends highly on increased City revenue. Should the Administration need to implement the Fiscal Year 2010 Contingency Plan, Recreation will take a severe reduction to our Fiscal Year 2010 proposed budget, a reduction of 8.5 million on top of the initial $8,079,146 we cut in November of 2008. The Fiscal Year 2010 Contingency Plan, if it's implemented, this would hurt the citizens, because we could only provide minimal services. All recreation facilities would operate at four hours a day, six days a week. By operating from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., we preserve after-school programs, but hundreds of athletic and cultural programs will be lost. The other choice would be to operate from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 and eliminate our after-school programs. Either one of these choices will have a devastating effect on services and programs offered to the citizens of Philadelphia.

The goal throughout the budget process has been to continue providing affordable athletic, cultural and educational opportunities to all citizens of Philadelphia, to maintain a positive presence in all neighborhoods throughout the City and minimize the effect on the most vulnerable. This budget reflects the Recreation Department's goal of protecting and providing the core services that the public depends on to maintain and improve their quality of life. Through these core services, we will support our city's youth and families, engage communities and create partnerships that will move the City forward in creating healthy and sustainable neighborhoods.

The City of Philadelphia has been offering public recreation programming for over 100 years and has been operating as the Philadelphia Department of Recreation since 1952. This is the final budget testimony for the Department of Recreation as we know it. We look forward to our merger with Fairmount Park and the new challenges ahead for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Thank you for allowing me to present testimony. I'll be pleased to answer any questions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Commissioner, what was the FY09 adopted Recreation Activity Fund amount for '09?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: It was 2.2 million, President Verna.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What is their proposed budget for FY10?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That's going to be restored, President Verna. It will be restored back to 2.2.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's good to hear.

Commissioner, do we have sufficient maintenance staff to maintain our facilities?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: With the current economic issues that we're having right now, we've been able to be creative, as you know, with our Operation Clean Start. We have been able to solicit the help of community members, other organizations as City Year to assist us in maintaining our facilities. We have -- we do have some openings in maintenance and we are in the process of trying to get them filled. Do we need to ensure that our facilities are maintained better? Absolutely. And if that happens, we have to hire additional maintenance staff.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well, how many vacancies do you have in the Maintenance Department?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I have 18 vacancies in the Maintenance Department.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Eighteen vacancies?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Eighteen vacancies.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How many do we have on staff presently?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I have 231. I'm sorry. Minus that 18. The 231 is my budgeted number.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I beg your pardon?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: The 231 is my budgeted number. So I have 213 currently.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you going to be able to hire the 18?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We have been in conversation with Budget as well as the Human Resource Department and we believe we will be able to hire.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. I see Steve is up there and he's nodding his head yes, we will be able to hire.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Madam President, I have a point of information.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Certainly.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Are those vacancies -- how long have they been vacant?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Some of those positions have been vacant over a year. They're difficult to hire, some of the positions, because they're skilled trade positions, and we don't often have people -- because of the salaries, we don't often have people running to the Department of Recreation to fill these positions.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Okay. All right. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Commissioner, you are requesting an increase of $313,000 in Object Code 399. That's on Page 48-39. Can you tell us how these funds will be used?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That's the total that was placed to restore the pools so we could have the 46 pools open. And that will be to hire -- we'll be hiring staff. We need to purchase chlorine for our pools.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So that would be to hire lifeguards and --

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: PMAs, pool maintenance assistants, and supplies.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: In your testimony you indicate that the Department will operate 46 outdoor pools and four indoor pools. How many pools do we have and are they all going to be open?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: No. We have 73 outdoor pools. We have eight indoor pools. Forty-six of the outdoor pools will be open and four of the indoor pools are open.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How many indoor pools did you say we have?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Eight.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

What Recovery Act funding is your department requesting?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I'm sorry, President Verna. I didn't hear you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What Recovery Act funding is your department asking?

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COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We've requested -- we put in five different proposals for stimulus funding and we -- different types so we could try to be picked for one, and we will not be receiving any funding from the stimulus, from the Recovery --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. I'm having difficulty hearing you. Can you pull the microphone closer, please.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We will not -- we put in for the Recovery Act.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You applied?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We applied.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: As of yet, we haven't been told whether or not we are going to receive any funding.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you tell us what projects they were for?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I can

get that for you, President Verna. I don't have them in front of me.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please do so I can circulate them.

Thank you.

At this time, the Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam President.

Commissioner Slawson, I just want to go on the record thanking you for you and your staff's diligence both at Shepard Recreation and at Rose Playground. The people from the Overbrook Civic Association were tickled pink to see a center that had been in a state of disrepair for years be transformed in a matter of a week by internal maintenance staff and really put a center, a village square, if you would, in the middle of an area that but for that recreation facility would not have an active place for kids to go and after-school programs to run. So I want to thank you for that. Shepard looks great as well with the partnership with the Eagles organization and that playroom which you demonstrated your athletic ability in. So thank you for that.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Thank you, sir.

COUNCILMAN JONES: As one of the people that sat through almost 100 interviews with the Fairmount Park new constituted board that's dealing with the merger, one of the things that jumped out at me, I was happy about the level of enthusiasm that Councilman Clarke spoke of and Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown spoke about, but what I was a little bit cautious and reserved about is the slant towards the Park half of the merger and not the Rec side of the merger, and it seemed as though that the overwhelming number of applicants were more familiar with Fairmount Park than actual ever been to Rose Playground or Shepard Playground or playgrounds like

Kendrick in my district.

So I am concerned as we go forward to make sure that that healthy, healthy balance exists between Parks and Recreation, and I just want to go on the record saying that I will be looking for that healthy balance from you and all of the new managers and Board members that we solicit. That's number one.

And with that, I want to go into some specific questions, and my number one question is, how are we doing with the Dell and the renovations? And I want to thank my colleagues for stepping up to the plate with some renovation dollars to support that effort.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: If it's okay with you, I'll give you a timeline that we have currently. But prior to that, I'd like to just comment also and thank you, Councilman Jones, Councilman Clarke, Councilman Tasco and Councilman Miller, because I approached all of you and asked for additional funding when we were running short for the Dell, and Councilwoman Blackwell, and all of you agreed to support this project. So I just wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you.

Currently, we have, with all the struggles that we had trying to have enough money, we have $6,475,000 for the Dell project. The breakdown is as follows: The state is 3 million; the Cultural Bond is 1.5 million; City Council, 1.25 million; and the capital funds is $725,000. And I can make this available for anyone that would like a copy.

The renovation timeline, the project for the amphitheater reconstruction was bid on in November of '08. The bid tabulations were received and bid recommendations made December of '08. The award recommendation was released January the 10th of '09. The notice to proceed was issued on February the 18th of '09. The storm water permit plans were approved April the 3rd of '09. And the physical work is scheduled to begin May the 1st.

COUNCILMAN JONES: That's the part I was listening for.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: And the project is expected to be completed by October the 1st of 2009 and with us being able to have a schedule for the Dell in 2010.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you for that update.

You mentioned that you deal with in your testimony 3,000 children a day for after-school programs, and that's an impressive number. And I guess this is not just directed to you but to the Administration and possibly even Mr. Agostini in the back. It would be helpful to me as a Councilperson to get a complete matrix of all of the available options for youth after-school supportive services, from Recreation, from the School District and others, so that we could look at a complete menu of both types and locations of those particular after-school homework assistance, recreational activities. Because it's kind of a little cloudy as to who is on first and what's on second and who covers what areas.

(Bell rung.)

COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm going to ask for that from -- and if it does exist, feel free, Mr. Agostini, to come up and explain that to me.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MR. AGOSTINI: Madam President, Councilmember, Steve Agostini.

We will put that together for you. It's a very reasonable request.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Man of few words. Thank you.

And I will yield to my colleagues for questioning, but I do have some other things, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Good morning -- or afternoon. Let me thank you for the timetable rollout. Could you please speak to who ultimately is responsible and will be held accountable for these dates as you've stipulated? Because that was unclear to us last year during budget testimony. It's certainly unclear during the capital hearings.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Who is going to be --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: With the timetables that you stipulated regarding the Dell, who is responsible?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Public Property. But we have been meeting with Public Property consistently about the Robin Hood Dell. So the two of us working together, we're going to make sure that these dates are -- we're staying on top of these dates.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. So you've indicated that the contractors have been selected. So there are no remaining hurdles now since work is scheduled to start 5/1. So any potential impediments or wrinkles have been ironed out for an effective start on May 1st?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes, they have.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay, then.

Anticipating the merger, in your testimony you do make mention of the merger. However, it is in your last paragraph. Share with us what types of internal efficiencies the Department has taken care of as you anticipate the merger happening.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, as Mark Focht, the Director of Fairmount Park, mentioned, there has been a major piece of this that has already taken place as far as Deputy Commissioner Washington. She's in charge of administration and she's responsible for the cluster which is responsible for Fairmount Park and Recreation. So that's a big piece that has been done since for years. And what we're doing now, we're looking to see if there are any additional efficiencies, and that will all come out as Commissioner DiBerardinis puts together this program and this leadership program and the meetings that we're going to have in reaching out to the community and getting feedback from Council as well to make some decisions. It's kind of early on for us to really decide, especially with some of these budget reductions, it's pretty early for us to talk about additional efficiencies.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

Playgrounds, what priority criteria do you consider when you are moving to refurbish playgrounds? And that comes as a result also of Capital Budget hearings where we learned that it costs approximately $250,000 to build one playground, which -- so just discuss briefly what is the criteria and how do those playgrounds become the lucky few that end up on the refurbishing list.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, I'm going to ask for Deputy Commissioner Johnson to come and answer that question.

(Witness approached witness table.)

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Michael Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Department of Recreation.

If it's a general maintenance repair, typically if it's replacing swings, if it's replacing anything under $15,000, our department would replace it.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What was that figure again?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Fifteen thousand. Anything over that is considered a capital expenditure and we would refer that to Public Property.

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COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. And is that figure a true figure, $250,000 to build one playground?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Depending on the size, that is a figure -- it's a tot lot. That's not a full-size playground that you would probably be talking about. That 250,000 figure that you're talking about is a tot lot.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Wow. Which conceivably is smaller; is it not?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: It's smaller and it's for younger kids, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see. I guess it was about two, three years ago there was a lot of discussion and debate in Council about our city going from full-blown pools to spray pools, for a number of different reasons, budget, lower maintenance and the like. Is there any type of facsimile of a playground that allows you to -- that's low maintenance, but still gives the play experience that parents want for their children, using the pool going to spray pool as an analogy or as an example?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: If I'm understanding correctly, is there a possibility for a spray ground and a tot lot to work together and provide the necessary environment without having a pool there?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: It is. Yes, absolutely.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So on your plan going forward and looking forward -- and this may be premature -- programmatically do you anticipate or what are some of the changes you anticipate changing and/or making new going forward within the Department?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: If we're talking about tot lots and we're talking about spray grounds -- are we talking specifically about spray grounds?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: For

children, period.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yeah. The one thing that I have looked into are the spray grounds, and I have a package of information that I could actually e-mail you that I got from Public Property, because I wanted to see what the cost difference was with a spray ground as opposed to the pool since we are having these economic situations right now, this crisis right now. And so I have some information, and if you'd like, I can share some of that with you, as well as e-mail you this information so you can get an idea of the different sizes of our spray parks and the cost of our spray parks and what it saves us having a spray park compared to a pool.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That was actually why we began to look at that as an alternative, because it offers the cooling that children want, but not the high maintenance that comes with a pool.

Talk to me about the Operation

Clean Start, a partnership with City Year.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:

That's an initiative that we started -- I think we had an announcement back in June, and it's a phenomenal program. Basically the attempt is to reach out, canvas the neighborhood, get all of our stakeholders that are involved in our rec center to come and help us revitalize our recreation center over a two- or three-day period. So we partner with City Year. We partner with local universities, local communities of faith to come in at a recreation center, help us revitalize it. And in some cases, I know we had a kick-off at -- the first one was at Martin Luther King where you were at the announcement, and that was a center that was somewhat dark and a little bit gloomy, and once those three or four hundred volunteers came in over that two- or three-day period, it went from a dark, gloomy center to a well-lit, vibrant facility.

So I'm excited about this initiative. So far we have had close to 4,000 volunteers. And if you look at the national volunteer rate of 19.61 cents an hour, that contributes to about $322,000 of in-kind resources that was supported in our recreation centers.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What does that equal in terms of facilities that benefited from that volunteer partnership?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I think it helps us when you bring in people from the community. One of the things that we address when we go into a designated Operation Clean Start site, we look at all of the open work orders in a particular rec center. So, for example, when we had the kick-off at Martin Luther King, we had work orders dating back to 2001. And so we went in and, for the most part, closed out all of those backlog work orders so we could bring that facility up to par. And then I think the most critical piece is when you bring in people from that community to partner with our staff and students from local schools to take a sense of pride and ownership of that particular recreation center.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And the total number of facilities that have benefited from that experience is what?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Eleven to date, and we've started again this spring going through another round of Operation Clean Start facility movements.

And the other thing that I think it's critical with Operation Clean Start, for each one of our Operation Clean Start initiatives, depending on which Council district we were in, we had meetings with the Council President, with Councilman Clarke and as well as Councilman Jones, and we go and we take photos of what needs to be done, and because we don't have the necessary capital funding to make the renovations and do the upkeep in the facilities, we have already identified what needs to be done and how much it would cost, and we present that to them, and everyone thus far has agreed. And so we're making progress in facilities that have just been gloomy.

It is important that the community members recognize that we want to come in and we want to change, because if we can start changing what's going on in the facilities, I believe we can start changing what's going on in the communities.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Lastly, we know that Fairmount Park is intimately involved with the Office of Sustainability. Is Recreation at the table and what are you doing in working with the Office of Sustainability and their efforts citywide?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: At present we don't have anyone that -- they have a team right now, and currently no one from Recreation is on that board.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. And is --

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That is something that I will look into, Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. Because given the world that you represent and given the mission and vision of the Office of Sustainability, it makes sense to me that there be some complementary activity across the universe in what they're doing, and in many ways that underscores Councilman Jones' observation during the listening of those 184 applicants for the Commissioners, Fairmount Park Commissioners. The talent is rich. Every demographic was represented, but overwhelmingly there was stronger interest, if you will, or presence of Park advocates than there were Recreation advocates. So it's our expectation that there's some leveling in the interest level.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you for your testimony.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

Is Councilman Green here? Oh, I didn't see you.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good afternoon.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Good afternoon.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Could you please -- I know you said you were going to provide your current spray versus pool analysis to the Chair. If you could also provide the plan that was proposed by the Street Administration that was put together for this exact purpose that was never implemented, in addition to your own plan.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I'm not familiar with what you're talking about, but I will find out.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Mayor Street had a proposal to do exactly that, and I think people currently in the Administration may have been very opposed to it, but I just would like to see that plan, because they did a lot of work on it and it went pretty far, and if you're not using that as a baseline, it may be useful to you to take a look at it also.

The other thing is, is there any money in the Capital Budget proposed? You were just talking about the inability to pay for the new spray pools. Is there any money in the Capital Budget for those to go in in the future?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: For our --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: For spray versus pool.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: For spray parks versus pools?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Spray parks, yeah. Is there any money for spray parks in the Capital Budget?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I have in front of me what we've designated for our facilities, and there's always -- I don't have the exact number. There's always money set for pools, but there's nothing set in our budget for spray pools.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Nothing for spray pools?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Nothing for spray pools.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And there's nothing in the proposed capital plan for spray pools for the Rec Department?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: No,

there's not.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, you are suggesting that there's significant savings involved. So personally I'd like to see an amendment to the capital plan where you want to have them to put those in in at least some areas so we can begin that discussion. If we're going to save money by doing it, let's not put it off another year. Let's get it in the capital plan and save the money.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Okay.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. If you could provide that to the Chair, please.

I'm fascinated by a number of things in the budget itself, but if you look at FY08 versus FY09, there were 604 employees in the Rec Department, 490 full time and 114 part time, and the total Class 100 spending was 33.8 million.

In FY09, there were 658 budgeted positions, an increase of 54, and accordingly, Class 100 appropriation increased to $36 million. As of January '09, only 585 of these 658 positions were filled, 474 full time of the 517 and 111 of the 141 part time. Presently the Class 100 obligation for FY09 has dropped down to $35.1 million. And I think I know the answer to this question, but so as of January 2009 we're down 19 positions, but the Class 100 estimated spend is up still over $1.2 million. And so can you describe to us why we're spending more with fewer people, 54 fewer positions, we're spending 1.2 million more?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Some of that, the union bonus is in there. That was about 500,000, a little over $500,000.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: The what?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: The union bonuses.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So there's a non-recurring item there?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes.

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COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Well, then if you look at FY09 versus FY10, the budget includes 622 positions even though there's only 585 right now, which is an increase of 37 from the January increment run, and the requested Class 100 appropriation is decreasing by 4.5 million from the FY09 estimated obligation. About 2.5 million of this reduction appears to be a drop in temporary and seasonal expenses. Can you explain the rest of the reduction and how you get there?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Some of what you're seeing is, we've transferred grant funding money into our Class 100. Well, some of the positions into the Class 100.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So you have grant funds paying for Class 100 positions?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We use grant funding -- well, the grant funding, some of the grant funding is for positions, and some of it we use for our staff. It's transferred into that, yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Could you actually just provide the Chair with a complete breakdown of that $4.5 million reduction rather than --

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Another 1.1 million of the reduction is a drop in Class 100 salaries for full-time employees. Other than bonus-related savings, can you, if you don't know right now, provide the Chair with how the Rec Department is achieving this reduction?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yeah, I'll provide that to the Chair.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you. And also provide the Chair exactly what the 1.575 million reduction in overall Class 100 funding is between FY10 and FY11.

On Page 5 of the detail, the Rec Department has 658 budgeted positions for FY09. I'm just going over some of the background again.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I'm sorry. I didn't hear which page you're referencing.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So I'm on Section 48, Page 5. As compared to June 2008 and as of January 2009, you were down 16 full-time positions and three part-time positions. Why are so many positions unfilled as of January?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Could you repeat your question, please?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Why are so many positions unfilled as of January?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We are in the process of filling some of those positions now, but as a result of the economic situation that's going on here, we've just been unsuccessful at filling positions.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: What impact is the unfilled positions having on your overtime expenditures?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: With the

Operation Clean Start, with the additional community involvement that we've been able to pull in, we've been able to manage our overtime and keep it pretty low.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So do you think it's appropriate in this environment to be hiring more people, significantly more people as compared to FY08 and, in fact, more people than exists in the Department today in terms of the January increment run?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, we definitely need additional maintenance staff, because in our initial cut, we reduced our Seasonal Maintenance Assistants and we also eliminated some vacant positions, which were maintenance positions, and one of the things that we're concerned about is the presentation of our facilities. In order to ensure that our facilities are clean, we have to have the necessary maintenance staff in those facilities, not just, you know, one doing two or three facilities, but we need to ensure that our A and our B facilities are staffed with full-time maintenance staff.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I don't think any of us would disagree with that. What about non-maintenance positions?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Our non-maintenance positions, the two positions that I have, two are in program and there are -- I have four in administration that are vacant, and because our administration cluster is responsible for Fairmount Park and the Department of Recreation, over 600-some-odd people, all of the seasonal staff that we hire during the summer, we're down accountants, we're down clerk typists, and these are people that we need to assist us in ensuring that we're responding in a timely manner, in an efficient manner. And so we're looking for positions that are crucial, that are critical to us being effective and efficient.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Would you please provide a job description of every single vacant position in the Department.

Looking specifically at Page 16 of the Rec Department budget detail, please walk us through the changes in the number of temporary and seasonal employees. You don't have to do it now, unless you would like to. And Class 100 spending from these employees from FY08 through FY09 and in the proposed FY10 budget. For instance, who are these employees, what do they do, when during the year are they hired, et cetera. And how is the Department going to achieve the 3 million reduction in spending category in FY10? Are these mostly pools and things like that?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: They're mostly pools, sir.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: And I'll

provide that to the Chair.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

If you look at -- Madam Chair, those are my detail budget questions. I have a few other very specific things, and I'll just get them to you for response.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam President.

I wanted to go on a line and continue on the line of the matrix of services that are available, particularly for that client population of after school. One of the things that we noticed in our travels was that there are a lot of excellent opportunities here, there and around the City that are both public and also private kinds of recreational activities, and I wanted to know to what degree we're coordinating with entities like Arthur Ashe. I understand they want to do an intense summer tennis program in recreation departments, and I wanted to know if we're capitalizing on that type of synergy that is available.

And, B, during the year, is there a way to work on, either through some additional -- going after additional funding or working with the School Board to provide transportation from the school buses to particular after-school facilities directly, thus allowing parents a greater latitude of where their kids can participate in recreational and after-school activities? I hope you got all that. I'll repeat it if you --

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, Councilman Jones, if I could start here real quick. The Chief Education Officer, Dr. Shorr, has pulled a group of --

pulled together a number of people, including the School District of Philadelphia, one, so we can get a handle on duplicating services; two, so we can start supporting one another in what we do. And so I'll know what they're doing, they'll know what I'm doing, and we can ensure that we're funneling kids to the right resources. And so the School District is a big part of what the Department of Recreation does.

Arthur Ashe has been a part of the Department of Recreation for a number of years. We host tennis at just about every last one of our tennis sites during the summer, and the Arthur Ashe staff, they are providing the -- operating the programs for our young people that attend our teen camps, that attend our summer camps. And so we do have a partnership and a relationship with Arthur Ashe currently and it has been going on.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I mean, as we start to develop this matrix that I requested from Mr. Agostini, it would be helpful to Councilmembers but, more importantly, to the end users such as parents to be able to look at a matrix and say, Here's where my kid can get a wonderful tennis experience. My interest may be in swimming pools, and over here they have a world-class pool over at the Crock Center on Wissahickon Avenue and over here there's a soccer experience, and down the line football is my thing. Shepard does a wonderful football program. But the point of it is that they have a menu of options and then means to get to those options, and by working with the School District, if we work to coordinate transportation efforts, they could be dropped off directly at a rec center that has a participating program. If we could just put our minds around the coordination of that or, dare I say, independently if the Rec Department had a transportation system that kind of had bus routes and opportunity routes. And I know that's an expensive proposition. I know we're in a recession. I know we have a budget deficit, but we should not plan our way in today, but plan our way to a better tomorrow, and one of those better tomorrows is giving parents an option to all of the things that you do have, but they just can't find out where and how to get there.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: One of the things that was done last year as a direct result of PhillyStat, a huge manual was put together of just what you're talking about, and that manual identified all of the summer programs that were offered throughout the City. And if I'm not mistaken, I believe that they're in the process of trying to put that out again. And we ensured that that was distributed to the School District, to the library, to all of our recreation facilities, and it not only listed the Department of Recreation, it listed every after-school, every summer program that was offered throughout the City.

COUNCILMAN JONES: As we look at the prospect of pool closings -- and that's a reality that we have to deal with, but one of those things as I mentioned is where is Plan B for my child this summer, where is the pool that is open to them, but also we have to be cognizant -- and I know you're aware of this based on the Powell experience that you had -- is that when you cross a boundary line that as a planner and as a City representative of Recreation, you don't recognize that that's the difference between one community versus another, and often there is youth conflict that follows crossing that boundary. So to close one pool and say let's just go down two miles to the next one often can be a life and death kind of challenge for a young person.

So we have to, in my opinion, kind of plan for some of these things, plan for them both by way of security but by way of safe transportation. So as we start to evolve -- and this is new for you by way of closings and having to navigate through this, and it's new for us by way of elected officials getting these requests. We have to put our heads together to figure out better ways to get kids to and from opportunities that are still available to them.

So as we develop this matrix, it's not just a logistics of where things are, but it also should be a logistics of how do we get there and how do real world crossing of boundaries work, and is it better for me to send my children from the 4th District maybe skip a recreation center and go down to one in Councilwoman Blackwell's district where there is a little more -- a little less friction that might be going on between the two communities.

So we really shouldn't have to plan our way around these things, but at the end of the day, it is far better that we give a little prevention and thought to this process versus figuring out why we're standing at a funeral. And so I just want to urge us to kind of take into account those kinds of logistical barriers that we face.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Thank you, Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: One last thing -- and the time clock is working in my favor. I see Charlie McPherson is not there. I'll get one more question in and I'll yield.

Particularly, Abbotsford and working with Philadelphia Housing Authority is another kind of cooperative joint venture that I think we should continue -- and I know we do -- but continue to explore. I went up Abbotsford, and we have a beautiful facility that is a multi-purpose center there. It has a beautiful stage, electronic screen. It is pristine in every way. When I walked in there, it was a first-class facility, but we don't have programs out of there. So I'm looking to see if there's peanut butter, jelly that we can bring together to make a sandwich by way of recreational opportunities in Abbotsford.

There are 250-plus families there, everything from young people to senior citizens, who would love to deal with exercise such as tai chi, but there's not a lot of activities, a lot of programming, and that was one of the complaints that I got from the residents there. I wanted to figure out where can we, how do we make those connect the dots to the resources that may be available to people in that area. Because they're a little outside of East Falls. They're a little outside of Hunting Park. So they're kind of in between.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: The one thing I could suggest, being mindful of our own budget constraints, it is always a lot easier to bring the staff from Abbotsford over to the Department of Recreation, allow us to do some training in programming, maybe they shadow some of our facility rec leaders for a week or a month, because we are not in a position to provide programming for other facilities, but I do believe that you could gain a lot if you shadow some of our rec leaders, and they pick up the necessary tools that they need to take back and run those same programs at their facilities.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I appreciate that invitation, but if you know Abbotsford, it's like a self-contained community. And I'm going to take you up on that, but it seems as though we could go after RFPs from other places such as the state maybe.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: If you don't mind, I think you hit, Councilman, on a very interesting point. If you look at the data, the research data, the most success in working with young people is when there's combined services or combined interventions or combined programs. It's rare when a single institution or a single agency can have a positive, meaningful, long-term impact on children and young people, whether you're keeping them safe, whether you're helping them become better ready to learn or healthier.

So in order to hit those marks, it's the kind of seamless collaborative approaches that you're talking about with the Housing Authority or other members were talking about with the School District or with the libraries or even with the combined agencies.

So I think there is something very important in your question, and, that is, how do we provide like the density and the level of service that works with families and communities and young people in a way that you can really measure your impact over the long term.

So your question I take very serious about how do we build those relationships, how do we align program interests, how do we make sure that we're hitting the quality mark to get the impact, and what are those impacts that we're looking for. So I just want to -- I welcome that question, and hope that -- and I know the Mayor cares deeply about this and I know I have his support in trying to move forward and think of how we do that with our sister agencies and our large non-profit organizations and with neighborhood groups.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you for that comment, and that's right on the line of what I was thinking. Commissioner Slawson has worked a great deal of time to manage her way through some of the crisis that she found as a new Commissioner, and one of them was space realignment, whether or not the School District's facility or the Recreation Department's facility or in this case PHA's facility was the best facility to house a program that actually gets to the end user.

So I don't want us -- and even though the library was the worst case of engagement processes that we may have went through, but I think both Council and the Administration learned from it, and as we move forward with the pools, as we move forward with other consolidations, that we will take and use the good out of that by saying what is the inventory of buildings, physical plant that we have, what's the best one, and do we want to run this program, that program out of which facility. And I think that deserves the best of our planning, and if we can do that and maximize our resources in these tough times, it will go a lot further than it has in the past.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Thank you.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

This discussion triggered for me everything that the Commissioner just mentioned. And so with all due respect to what PhillyStat, the important work that they have done, the previous Administration did as much work in making sure that DHS, who is an important matrix in this wheel, the Art Museum has beautiful after-school programming, the libraries, the Rec Department and also the schools, and what has been lacking is a willingness by professionals to reach across systems and pull this world of out-of-school programming together under one matrix, as Councilman Jones has spoken of.

So I'm delighted to hear that the Commissioner gets it, and when you say "seamless collaborative approaches" where we -- where parents have options and many choices, because they're out there but they have been -- not a continuing, not a thread, but runs through all of those different systems and departments.

So a couple of points I needed to make. PhillyStat is doing great work. DHS has had a document about that thick for the last six or seven years that lists any and every out-of-school program you could think of across the City. It grew exponentially -- I mean, incrementally over the years by making it better and more user friendly. So it's great to know that that work is continuing. And the challenge continues around us as a city pulling together all those worlds that are doing the best they can to make life different for children. And so it behooves us to remember them all: DHS, the Art Museum of Philadelphia, the libraries, the Rec

Department and now -- and the School District has always done it, but my experience in the time that I've been here is that for reasons I don't understand and won't go into, there was some resistance to pulling those worlds together, including the School District. Do you follow me?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I do.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So thank you, Commissioner, for recognizing that we still have work to do in that area.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

Just a couple of quick questions. The first is, do you have a property management system?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Our operations deputy, maintenance.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Property maintenance is managed by our Maintenance Department.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Do you have a property management system so you know where each property is in the City, what maintenance has to be done there, a regular maintenance schedule?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We have a work order system that we've just actually gotten up and running in the past eight months. The Department has had it for some time, but we've been using it, and that's how we've been able to track our work orders and how many we were behind and how many we've been able to close out and how many we currently have now. Yes, we do have a work order system.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: A work order system would be one aspect of a property management system. Do you have like a property management system?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: To

identify where all of our property is? I'm not sure.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: One system that identifies your properties, knows what maintenance needs to be done.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We don't have one system that does that, sir. We do not.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank you.

I had one more question, but I've lost it, Madam Chair. I'll send it to them.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

I certainly want to greet both Commissioners. We've worked with Mike DiBerardinis on the state level and when he was here, and we look forward to working with you in the future and appreciate all that you know. And I want to say a special thanks to Commissioner Slawson and her team, Mr. Johnson and all of you. I know there is a lot to be done and I know that -- I know of your commitment. We've walked many streets and talked about the vacant properties and everything from the ice rink to area that's just locked in where we need to do more, and I know how committed you both are. And certainly I don't know what changed rings. I know that I look forward to working with you in the future and still need to talk with you in more detail about what's going to happen this summer. Again, I just want to say thank you.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Thank you, Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Just real

quick. And your endurance is wonderful. I wanted to ask in reference to a lot of the changes in funding streams, is there an RFP committee that meets regularly to take advantage of some of the opportunities both in the private foundations and within the federal government and possibly even state funding that could be applicable to your department? Because as I look at your testimony and you cutting some of the rec trainees and some of the -- it just seems to me that you have all the infrastructure in the world and all of the kinds of trappings that make for a good match to some of the programs that want to go out there.

Is there a group of folk that maybe is shepherded by the Mayor's Office or some interdepartmental committee that kind of looks at you as an asset and says that we could partner with this organization, that organization and receive X funding?

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COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I think that's a twofold answer. I believe Keri Salerno, who works for the Mayor, her job is to raise additional funds for the City, as well as while we were under Health and Opportunity, whenever opportunities came up with private partnerships that we could submit RFPs for, the opportunities -- they ensured that we knew. But does the Department of Recreation have that group in our office? No.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Because I just really think that the City as a whole, but your department in particular, has a real opportunity to go after some money. I know these aren't big bites often, but when I looked at my past life within PCDC, we used to live on the edges of what big departments didn't go after, whether it was the Cops Program by the federal government that we were able to get grants from or whether it was other national associations dealing with recreation and/or in this case Fairmount Park, that we really just need a full-time crew of writers, responders to RFPs. And if there was ever a time where that would be a worthwhile position, I think it is now, both because of the budget deficit and we can't afford to let even the small bites go by us at this point, but also in keeping us in the loop with trends nationally and then, therefore, locally that we need to keep our eyes on. And if we do that and if they met weekly, monthly just to go after these opportunities, I think at the end of the day, as Councilman Green said, we could measure that progress that, let's say, instead of a three percent cut annually that we used to have to experience when I was sitting on that side of the table, we might be talking about a three percent goal of new revenue through RFP gathering that we could go after. And if we set that as a goal, this year maybe we only got two percent, but in the upcoming years if we did that, we could use it for everything from program delivery to the end users, which are our young people and our citizens, but also upgrading of equipment, use of technology, things like that that are innovative things that are near and dear to Councilman Green's heart.

So if we just had that as a goal for the Administration, but I think your department in particular could go after a lot of grant opportunities.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I agree with you, and I do know in past years the Department of Recreation actually had a line item in their budget where there was a specific grant manager, and that person was seeking additional funding for the Department of Recreation. And I believe I could say once Commissioner DiBerardinis starts putting this merger together, I think we will all be excited about what the outcome will be.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I think a

lot of those RFPs wound up on his desk up at the state level. So we don't want to forget that process.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Finally, can you please provide to the Chair a cost to open every single pool, those that are being opened and those that are not being opened, what it costs and then including staff, everything.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes, I can.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Do you know the difference, total aggregate difference, between opening all the pools and opening the ones that are being proposed?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I don't

have that number available, but I do have that, so I can get that over to you today and make sure I get the Chair what you're asking me to get her. Because we did do a breakdown of what it would cost to open all 73 of our pools.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: You're welcome.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have any other Councilmembers that have questions or comments of the Recreation Department?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing no one, thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

We will now hear from Atwater Kent Museum.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon. Welcome. Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. SAND: Good afternoon, Council President Verna and members of the City Council. I am Viki Sand, Executive Director of the Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia, and I am here to present testimony in support of the Atwater Kent's budget of $248,630. This represents a decrease in Class 100 funds of $71,370 originally appropriated in Fiscal Year 2009 and represents the potential reduction of a second staff position, from five in Fiscal Year 2009 to three in 2010. Specifically, one of the municipal guards, who also functions as a custodial position, has already been eliminated and the Museum is now faced with making a decision related to a second position. The budget continues to include support of $50,000 for the consolidated, long-term storage facility for the Philadelphia City History Collection.

In these extraordinary economic times, everyone associated with the Atwater Kent applauds the commitment of the Mayor and the Council to support Philadelphia's cultural community and creative economy. We are particularly appreciative for the work of Gary Steuer, the City's Chief Cultural Officer. We also want to thank Councilmember Frank DiCicco, who was instrumental in helping the Museum receive state RCAP funds. Bill Greenlee is the Council's representative on the Museum Board and he has been of great assistance to us and we are deeply appreciative. And Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown consistently provides the Museum with good counsel and connections throughout the City.

We are grateful to all members

of the Council who have provided their support, and I would be remiss in not recognizing and acknowledging the functional support, administrative support provided by the Department of Recreation and Commissioner Susan Slawson's work. I was particularly interested in the discussion about after-school programs, and I am pleased to say that Commissioner Slawson and I have had very preliminary conversations about how to truly make the resources of the City History Museum integrated with the programs of the Department.

In Fiscal Year 2009, this has been a year of preparation for the Museum, as it is addressing longstanding systemic issues to realize its full potential as a participant in the civic dialogue. Specifically, this year we have completed plans and created architectural and engineering drawings for the first major renovation of the Museum building since the 1940s. We have moved 103,855 -- every one of them we've counted -- objects, paintings and books and pamphlets from five different locations around the City to one new off-site facility that meets professional standards, and we are in the process, believe it or not, of completing the first complete inventory of the collection. I'm also pleased to say that we are working to re-brand and market the Museum in new ways to expand the institutional profile of the Museum, expanding its constituency and increasing attendance and program participation generally.

I do want to say that although the Museum has been closed since January, we have continued our commitment to our educational programs, and just this past March, we completed our participation in National History Day where we worked with five middle and high schools - Constitution High School, Woodrow Wilson Middle School, Masterman Middle and High

School, Independence Charter School and Lamberton Robert High School in Overbrook. And we are delighted to be among the 30 historical institutions and archives in the City who are working to invigorate the teaching of history in Philadelphia. As we all say, if you can't get excited about history in Philadelphia, then you can't get excited about it.

We have always -- we are also really delighted to, the last two months we were open in December and January, to waive the fees for our highly regarded Quest for Freedom Program, the history of the anti-slavery movement in Philadelphia, where students, whatever their age, and adults are able to really see some of the treasures of the collection related to this subject. And in the two months that we waived the fees, we had over 22 groups scheduled with over 700 students. And, again, these were from public schools, after-school programs and an Outward Bound program.

This year, the City History Museum is 70 years old and it may be helpful to revisit some of the, just briefly, some of the transformation you've helped achieve. Since I've been coming to talk with you in 2002, with this very important core support, about one-third of our annual operating budget has come from the City, and using that we have leveraged the following:

We have raised $4.5 million in two years toward a $5.7 million restoration of the Museum building. It includes 1.5 million in private funds, funds from the City of Philadelphia that were longstanding capital, as well as the $250,000 Cultural Bond Act. We are delighted to have just had released $1 million in state RCAP money, and my testimony includes other major grants we've received.

We have worked with the

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Department of Public Property and Commissioner Schlotterbeck to secure for the first time a ten-year lease for a single, professionally equipped storage facility that now includes a portion -- a direct support for a portion of that rent. I cannot tell you how important that is. We have literally gone from very difficult space in five different locations around the City to one professionally equipped facility that now holds the entire collection.

We just received earlier this fiscal year an award of over $700,000 from the William Penn Foundation to develop marketing initiatives and long-term development initiatives to raise the profile of the Museum and build its base of financial support.

We have raised over $700,000 in private and grant funds for collection management initiatives. As you may know and remember from previous testimony, the Museum is the steward of the Historical

Society of Pennsylvania Art and Artifact Collection and Philadelphia-related material from the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies and the Insurance Company of North America, the great CIGNA business collection. And now -- and we believe we are taking very good care of that.

We've generated over $200,000 in federal and private foundation support to build curriculum-based education programs, and we have developed and presented significant programmatic collaborations, including a federally supported program with the Free Library of Philadelphia, WXPN and the House of UMOJA. The title of the Museum's component of that was "So What's the Story About Violence in Philadelphia," and on kiosk exhibitions displayed in five different branch libraries, we provided historical context that was the basis of -- has been the basis of programming in those libraries and at the

Museum.

Currently, the Museum, as I said, is closed, and in preparation, we expect to begin the renovation literally in May, and when we reopen in 2010, the Philadelphia History Museum will have what currently doesn't exist anywhere, an overview of Philadelphia history, what is the development of this great city. We will have on exhibit the iconic objects that everyone should see when they visit the City History Museum, and we're working with Commissioner Joan Decker to have on exhibit long-term loan the City Charter. We will have the wampum belt and a full array of material.

We will add two new galleries in our building, and we will have a flexible behind-the-scenes collection study center on the third floor.

Central to this whole issue -- there's not so much that's glamorous about this renovation. In fact, because it's a new heated and cooling system, it's a power system and electrical system that will allow us to do the kinds of exhibitions that 21st century visitors expect, and children particularly, and it will also help us accommodate groups on the first floor and as for rentals.

When we reopen the new City History Museum, it will be very difficult if we must do it with the reduction of a second municipal guard. It is a very difficult situation, and I appreciate that everyone has what is important to them. But we are working with the Budget Department and with Gary Steuer to see if there is -- see what the opportunities are for this. It would seriously undermine the reopening at the time when we are just beginning, I think, to truly fulfill for these new times the role of the Museum.

I know that one of the issues that's very important to the Council and to the Atwater Kent is that as part of its preparation to receive the City capital grants funds of $250,000, we met with the compliance officers of the Minority Business Enterprise Council and filed an Equal Opportunity Plan, and you see the percentages in my testimony. This is slightly less than what is the City's goal, because, in fact, this is -- it was our understanding from the Council representatives that HVAC systems and renovation of historical buildings is difficult, but I say that it is our aspiration to meet the City's goals in other areas than what the $250,000 will go to, and we expect that the entire project will be in compliance with that goal.

The Atwater Kent Museum trustees, staff, members and friends are deeply committed to the proposition that the history of Philadelphia presented as a diverse, international, urban laboratory supports and encourages civic participation and is a source of civic pride. As the history museum of what

Philadelphians share, the Atwater Kent helps children and adults see themselves as part of the Philadelphia experience and within the broader themes of American history. We believe that such perspective reduces isolation and alienation and helps individuals find their place within the human experience.

One year from now we will be inviting you to a grand reopening of the City History Museum, and it will -- the Atwater Kent will then truly be one of Philadelphia's important cultural success stories.

The Atwater Kent is remaining true to its mission. It is improving the care of the premier collection of Philadelphia material culture and making it accessible, as never before, for residents and visitors through collaborative programming opportunities. I hope that you all -- I hope the City Council, Madam President, feels a real sense of pride in what you've helped achieve.

That ends my testimony, and I'm happy to answer questions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so very much, and we all look forward to next year at this time when the renovations will all be completed.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

Very quickly. More of a statement than a question. As Council's representative on the Board, I can tell you we and the City as a whole have every reason to be excited about what the City's History Museum -- and that's what it is. Some people don't realize, but that's what is, the City's History Museum -- will look like next spring. And I think a lot of us have always felt that if it's not a hidden treasure, it's always been maybe a not-known-well-enough treasure, and I think we're getting there where it's a lot more well known and a lot more productive. And I can assure you, not too embarrass her while she's sitting at the table, the biggest reason for these drives is Viki Sand. She's got to be one of the most proactive, positive and enthusiastic people I've ever been associated with, and the Museum has made exceptional strides since she's been the Executive Director.

So thank you, Viki, for all your help.

MS. SAND: Thank you, Councilman.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Let me say that I completely concur with Councilman Bill Greenlee regarding the enormous strides you've made under your leadership since 2002, and I want to commend you on the understanding that museums can play a part in the lives of children and the work you did prior to the renovation with regards to connecting with the Rec Department and the School District, and look forward to that growing even more after those renovations are done.

The one question I have is, I have learned that the Office of Sustainability in many ways will be our point anchor for the distribution of the Recovery Act dollars, and since you are indeed doing renovations and knowing that for all of us who are doing that, institutions or citizens, we want to try to do it as green as we can. So have you had a chance to sit down with Mr. Mark Alan Hughes, either you or Mr. Steuer, to discuss how and if Atwater can be a candidate to receive and benefit from those dollars?

MS. SAND: Thank you. Thank you for your nice remarks as well.

We have met -- we have sent a proposal to the Office of Sustainability, and as a matter of fact, I am right now going through our drawings -- we just received them with our project manager -- to identify those areas where we can comply and potentially gain additional dollars. So, yes, we are doing it, and I thank you very much for alerting us to that.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So you're in discussions?

MS. SAND: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And are you having the presence of Mark Alan Hughes himself?

MS. SAND: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right, then. Thank you for your testimony.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Any other questions from members of the Committee?

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The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

I likewise want to compliment the Atwater Kent Museum. We do so love it. We all like to stand on our very addresses, our blocks. And certainly we would like to support them in all that they want to do. They always have a positive agenda, always sacrifice and always do what they can for their love of our city.

Thank you.

MS. SAND: Thank you very much, Councilwoman.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you. I just have a couple of -- thank you for the work you do. I'm ashamed to say, I have not been there, but your testimony has inspired me to get there, so I will come shortly. I've passed the beautiful building.

How much of your budget comes from sources other than the City of Philadelphia?

MS. SAND: Two-thirds.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: About two-thirds? That's great. I think that's important for people to recognize, that we provide the last dollar, but there's a lot of private money helping you.

How much of that is from -- do you charge a fee to come in?

MS. SAND: We do charge a fee. It's very modest, $5 for adults, $3 for children, but children under 12, 12 and under, are free. So families can come in for $10.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So how much of your revenue is from the admission fee?

MS. SAND: Very modest. Our

whole earned revenue at this point is about eight percent, and that's been one of the really serious difficulties, and one of the reasons for the renovation, frankly, is so that we can begin -- so that we can raise that to 14 percent in about two years and then hopefully more.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You testified that you have four and a half of the 5.7 million needed for the renovation. How do you plan on bridging that gap?

MS. SAND: Do you have anything in your pocket?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Not this year we don't, I'm afraid. I think to Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown's point, if you have your plans, if you have your permits, you're one of the few institutions in the City that is actually prepared to get federal stimulus money for the construction, especially if your heating and cooling systems have an energy efficiency component, et cetera.

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MS. SAND: You know that I was being respectful.

We are actually looking at the sustainability, the federal sustainability, as a piece of this. We are also looking to raise the money privately. And I think we were candidly very excited. I mean, we really saw the state release of the RCAP money as central to -- it's basically 80 percent of the project. So we are now going to several different sources, public and private, to try to raise the balance.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's great. I would think because it's energy efficiency, that you would qualify for some federal dollars. So, I mean, please don't be -- push them, find -- do you know what the dates are for when applications for the kind of things you have to do are approved?

MS. SAND: It's my understanding that it's basically very tight at this point, like within the next several weeks.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right.

MS. SAND: So we're operating on that timetable.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Don't miss a deadline. And I would encourage you to, if you can't get things together with the City, apply yourself.

MS. SAND: Right.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: The other thing is, are you impacted by Plan B, the contingency plan, in terms of a loss of revenue from the City?

MS. SAND: Yes, but it would simply be yet another position.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Madam Chair, I simply wanted to strongly urge our new member of Council, Councilman

Bill Green, to put it on his agenda, "to do" list and make sure that he gets to visit the Atwater Kent Museum.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Madam Chair, I'll go if Councilwoman Brown will bring me.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It would be my pleasure.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Any further questions?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing none, thank you so much.

MS. SAND: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We will now hear from the Art Museum.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

MS. HARRITY: Good afternoon.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

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Identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. HARRITY: My name is Gail Harrity. I am the Interim Chief Executive Officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and I'm honored to be before the Council today. I am joined by a number of colleagues: Cheryl McClenney-Brooker, Director of External Affairs for the Museum; Bob Morrone, Director of Master Planning; Al Shaikoli, Director of Engineering, Facilities and Operations; Bill Valerio, Assistant Director for Administration; Bob Rambo, Chief Financial Officer; and Paul Pincus, Officer for Planning and Special Projects. We are a large team at the Museum, and there are many other colleagues, but I wanted to begin my testimony, one, by thanking you, Madam Chair and others in City Council, for acknowledging last June with an extraordinary resolution the unbelievable service of our -- extraordinary service of our Museum Director, Anne d'Harnoncourt, who served as Director for 26 years. As you know, she died suddenly last June, and the Museum and its trustees and supporters were very thankful for the moving tribute and resolution passed by this City Council.

It has been an eventful year for the Museum, a year of extraordinary successes and unprecedented challenges, and in the interest of time, I will mention only three notable accomplishments this year.

First, the success of Art Speaks, the Museum's new education program, which was launched in September of 2008. And this is a unique collaboration of five Philadelphia museums: The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Barnes Foundation, the Fabric Workshop, the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Contemporary Art, and the Museum, and its goal is to provide a museum experience for every fourth grader in Philadelphia's public schools, all 14,000 of them. It's a program funded through a National Leadership federal grant and through private corporate support. And so we were pleased that this year the Museum was able to serve over 90,000 public school students.

A second notable achievement is the success and the public response to the Cezanne and Beyond exhibition, a blockbuster exhibition by every measure. We have extended it through the end of May, and I hope you have read that it has received rave reviews from local, national and international press, including a two-page spread in Time Magazine, an eight-minute CBS Sunday morning national TV program highlighting the exhibition, major features in the New York Times, Boston Globe, Washington Post, as well as the full array of local media from the Inquirer, the Daily News, the Tribune and Al Dia. It has drawn visitors from more than 40 states, from Maine to California, from Texas to Minnesota, and from more than 14 countries around the world, including France, Japan, Argentina and Israel, just to name a few. The Boston Globe says -- and I quote from their review -- said, "There won't be a show anywhere in the world this year to compete in ambition, scope and sheer concentration of master works with the Cezanne and Beyond exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art." So we are quite proud and hope that all of City Council has an opportunity to see it before it closes in the end of May.

The third accomplishment -- and we are also extremely honored to report on this -- is that this year the U.S. Department of State asked the Museum to represent the United States in the Venice Biennale with an exhibition of the work of Bruce Nauman. This exhibition opens in Venice this June, which is an exhibition -- one of the most prestigious contemporary art exhibitions in the world, and this too promises to bring international attention to Philadelphia.

So special exhibitions and the Museum's own permanent collection can only -- a special exhibition such as these are only organized in Philadelphia because the Museum operates day in and day out a world-class institution with a world-class facility. And, of course, we're housed in a City-owned building with the responsibility to care for City-owned collections.

The Museum has depended on City operating support to pay for the fundamental operating costs of security and building maintenance since the doors of the main Museum building opened in 1928, and at that time, the City committed to fund 100 percent of the security and maintenance costs on the annual basis. As recently as 1992, the City's appropriation was $4.6 million a year, and it still covered 100 percent of the security and maintenance costs.

However, in the City's financial crisis in the early '90s and by 1996, the City appropriation was reduced to 2.25 million, and despite annual escalations in the Museum's cost of security and maintenance, the City support remained flat at that level for nine years, through 2004. In Fiscal 2009, the support was increased to $3 million, but then subsequently reduced during the rebalancing plan to 2.4 million. As you know, in Fiscal '10, the budget proposes City support of 2.3 million, and at present, our annual security and maintenance costs stand at 6.2 million.

I think it's helpful to give this sort of larger view of City support, because it's not just this year that we are coming before this Council. We have responded, and we feel in a very positive way, to successive administrations who have urged the Museum to diversify sources of revenue, and we did. We undertook to build our endowment, to obtain gifts and grants from a spectrum of foundations and corporations, and to raise individual philanthropic donations. We also made strategic investments that delivered impressive returns through earned revenue initiatives, expanding our membership to an all-time high of over 60,000 members, and we've developed retail programs and food service programs that contribute substantially to the bottom line. So over this past period since the early 1990s, we've developed a financial model, which resulted in receiving approximately one-third of our operating revenue from endowment income and public support, one-third from revenue generated through earned income activities such as admissions and retail sales, and one-third in contributed income.

Together with public funding,

all of the above provided the funds needed for the collection care, special exhibitions and education programs that in turn have had a deep and positive impact on the City's quality of life, educational opportunities and economic prosperity.

As you know, the economic impact of the Museum is substantial, averaging approximately $225 million annually, with special exhibitions generating intense economic activity over a short two- to three-month period, putting heads in beds, mouths in restaurants and passengers in taxis. In Fiscal Year 2008, which included two major exhibitions, Renoir Landscapes and Frida Kahlo, the Museum generated $242 million in economic impact in the region. So this was a relatively successful business model for both the Museum and the City, until the great stresses of the global financial downturn this year.

Like universities and major

museums around the country, the value of the Museum's endowment has dropped substantially. Institutions with the largest endowments, such as Harvard University or the Getty Museum, have been the hardest hit and the first to lay off staff and faculty. Individuals, corporations and foundations are also much less able to be generous sponsors of Museum programs and exhibitions, and earned revenue sources such as the Museum's gift shops and restaurants are also considerably softer than they were a year ago.

The broad decline across all forms of revenue makes the Museum different from City departments that receive their entire operating support from the City of Philadelphia. It also makes the proposal to reduce the Museum's annual operating appropriation by 700,000, a 24 percent cut relative to the original FY09 appropriation, much more difficult. The result of the Museum's decreased revenue from all other sources have to be taken into consideration, and we have already undertaken a major initiative to cut costs and enhance revenues while maintaining our commitment to public service.

So as you may remember reading on the front page of the Inquirer in February, we have postponed exhibitions involving international loans. We have closed second-floor galleries on Friday evenings. We have cut allocations to marketing, education and other programs. We have frozen positions, reduced salaries five to ten percent and eliminated 30 staff positions, or seven percent of the staff.

Relative to the staff size of peer institutions across the country, the Museum's staff has already been lean, efficient and productive. So further reductions, proposed reductions, would not be trimming fat, but very much cutting into the bone.

As the challenges of the past years have been -- and we know that the Museum is not alone in facing the difficulties that result from the global downturn. The Museum does acknowledge that we must accept cuts in operating support for Fiscal '10, sharing the sacrifice being made across the City and in all City departments. But we ask that the Museum not receive any further reductions in City operating support. Further decreases in City funding would inevitably lead to Draconian cost-cutting actions that would in turn have a dramatic impact on the public through further reductions in hours, programming, greatly diminishing the Museum's public service and economic impact.

The silver lining for the Museum and for the arts and culture organizations of the City more broadly is that the Mayor's proposed operating cuts are on a scale that is commensurate with the cuts across all City departments. We take heart that Mayor Nutter and his Chief Cultural Officer, Gary Steuer, recognize that the arts are not a frill or luxury to be set aside for better years. Instead, the arts are an investment in our city's future, an economic driver of cultural tourism in the present and an essential part of the ecosystem of City services that create the high quality of life that Philadelphians across and in all neighborhoods enjoy.

Finally, I would like to thank the City Council for their ongoing support of the Museum's capital projects and just conclude my remarks by speaking briefly about the capital projects.

Construction projects of the Museum's Master Plan that are scheduled for completion on time and under budget this year totaled 31.8 million in Fiscal '08 in Philadelphia-based regional expenditures, supporting 110 full-time equivalent jobs generated by construction labor expenditures, and the Museum is very proud to have increased the percentage of contracts awarded to African American-owned, women-owned and other minority-owned firms now at 45 percent, up nine percent from 39 percent this time last year.

This spring and summer the Museum will complete our exterior renovation to the City's landmark building, which includes a re-pointing, cleaning and the repair of the exterior limestone facades of the City's building and the historic -- the renovation of the historic polychrome terra cotta ornamentation and bronze window grilles designed by Tiffany Studios, as well as the repair of the four-acre roof. This exterior upgrade of the Museum corrected urgently needed public safety matters and intervened to preserve the City's historic beauty and landmark of a great building. The project will receive an award from the Preservation Alliance of

Greater Philadelphia next month.

As of mid-February, the Museum also completed its below-grade parking facility, and it too has been given an award by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. We have received a Certificate of Recognition Award for the garage's environmentally progressive design, and it is a design that is green in that it includes natural ventilation and lighting, superior water absorption and storm water runoff prevention, and two green roofs, which are being transformed as we speak tree by tree and plant by plant into a landmark and landscaped sculptural garden that will open later this summer, providing enhanced parkland and spectacular views of Fairmount Park, the Waterworks, the Schuylkill River and Boat House Row.

The Museum's current capital project priority is the next phase of our Master Plan called the Keystone Project, because it enables all subsequent phases of the Master Plan to proceed. The Keystone Project includes three critically important aspects of work:

One, upgrades and strategic replacements of utility and energy systems, transforming the infrastructure of the 80-year-old iconic building into an energy-efficient facility, which will -- which serves, as you know, between 850,000 to a million visitors annually;

Two, the construction of critically important secure loading docks on the south side of the Museum building that will not only provide a separate bay for art deliveries as well as a separate bay for all other deliveries, but it will also alleviate truck traffic, and some of those trucks are 80-foot-long tractor trailer trucks. So it will alleviate the truck traffic on Kelly Drive, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Fairmount neighborhood; and

Thirdly, the Keystone Project

will make improvements to roadways and the circulation on Art Museum Drive for improved public safety for pedestrians, for vehicular traffic, for bicycles, for tour buses and for school buses.

So these infrastructure projects of the Keystone Project are a critically important next step for the Museum and for one of the great cultural icons and destination definers of Philadelphia in that it will leverage private support in the next phases of the Museum's renovation plans. And we have always envisioned this Master Plan as a great public-private partnership, but this next phase, which is mostly central plant and loading dock, is heavily reliant upon the need for public funding. So your support of the Keystone Project will strengthen an institution so that it can continue to serve generations of Philadelphians and our visitors from near and far. With your help, the Museum and all of Philadelphia's organizations of

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art and culture will continue to thrive and contribute to the vitality of this great city, enriching the lives of its citizens and attracting visitors and businesses from beyond its borders.

So thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MS. HARRITY: I appreciate your questions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon.

MS. HARRITY: Good afternoon.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's great to see you guys.

You just mentioned the Keystone Project, I believe you call it. How much did the Planning Commission recommend we put in the Capital Budget for the Keystone Project?

MS. HARRITY: The Planning

Commission's Capital Program over the six-year period, including Fiscal '10, includes -- the Administration includes $11 million. The Planning Commission had originally recommended $22 million over the six-year period.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And how much money from other sources have you raised for the Keystone Project?

MS. HARRITY: We have recognized that this is a substantial investment in a City-owned building that will require both federal and state support. We have successfully raised through state and a few foundations commitments of up to $70 million for what we anticipate will be a $100 million project.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So you have $70 million in commitments from sources other than the City of Philadelphia. Does the 11 million appropriated in the Capital Program budget allow you to break ground?

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MS. HARRITY: I think the -- we are working very closely with the Budget Director and with the Planning Commission, as well as with the state and federal sources to get to a level that will allow us to break ground. We are encouraged that the scope of work does qualify for federal funding, for stimulus funding, and we're working to put all of those pieces together to take to our Board.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Although the stimulus funding -- I mean, as I said in my office, I don't think you're likely to get any, because you're not going to spend the money quickly enough, because you have to spend it within 18 months, a certain amount of time, and these projects are, I think at this point, longer lead times than that.

MS. HARRITY: Well, actually, we have submitted information to the City that shows that approximately 50 percent of our project, or $48 million, is shovel ready by federal stimulus package standards and it does qualify. So the question is, does it qualify in several areas of energy conservation, roadway work and other areas that -- we are working now closely, as I said, with the City, with the State and with federal legislators to better understand how portions of the project could be funded through different aspects of federal funding.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's great. And if you were to get federal stimulus money, I think that will be terrific. It might allow you to break ground, but if you don't get it, are you able to proceed with the 11 million that's in the Capital Budget?

MS. HARRITY: No, we are not.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Would you be able to proceed with the $22 million the Planning Commission suggested?

MS. HARRITY: I think the ultimate decision to break ground rests with the trustees of the institution, but certainly there is -- the trustees are monitoring the funding and looking closely at whether or not we are able to fund the full project. We wouldn't want to begin or break ground without a commitment of full funding.

So I think, yes, if there was increased funding from any public source, city, state or federal, to match the total cost of the project, we would be able to break ground.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: What's the rationale for not including in a six-year capital plan the additional $11 million, which obviously is paid back with bonds over 30 years? So it doesn't really have a significant operating impact on the City, but leverages $70 million in private funds. What's the rationale for not adding the 11 million to the capital plan that would allow you to start $70 million of work, make the Museum available for more tourists, increase the local economy, et cetera?

(Bell rung.)

MS. HARRITY: Well, I think that -- I think the City has been extraordinarily supportive of the project and I am also aware that the Capital Budget is not nearly sufficient for a city the size of Philadelphia with aging infrastructure. So I feel that we are working in close partnership to allocate limited resources in a wise manner and we are working creatively together to find the -- to close the gap that would enable us to break ground.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Is the $70 million at any risk if it's five years before we appropriate the money needed to begin this project?

MS. HARRITY: I think I'd have to get back to you on that.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Would you have any objection to the co-equal branch of government, City Council, amending the capital plan to add $11 million for the Art Museum so that you can begin this construction?

MS. HARRITY: No. That sounds -- no objection --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

MS. HARRITY: -- from the Museum. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon. First of all, as the member who lives the closest to the Art Museum, I certainly commend you on the parking facility and everything else you do at that beautiful building over there, and always have to mention the Perelman building there for a great improvement to the neighborhood there. And, by the way, I saw Cezanne and Beyond. Everything you do over there, it was a great program.

I just have one question. You mention in the beginning of your testimony about the program Art Speaks and what you do for including public school children, which is very commendable. I have to add, though, as a, many, many years ago, a Catholic school graduate, are there any programs that are also open to non-public school students? Can you talk a little bit about that?

MS. HARRITY: Yes, I can talk a bit, and I also might ask my colleague, Cheryl McClenney-Brooker, to speak to that. But the Museum is recognized as having one of the best and most diverse museum education programs in the country. Marla Shoemaker, the Senior Curator of Education, is honored on a regular basis by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts for the breadth of programs for public and parochial schools in the City and beyond, and the range of programs, from after-school programs, which were mentioned earlier in today's testimony, to programs for people with sight -- with limited sight to programs in jails and other programs are extraordinary. We have a map in fact that I would love to share with the Council that shows the number of programs and the diversity of them in every councilmanic district.

But, Cheryl, you may want to add to that on some of the collaborations.

MS. McCLENNEY-BROOKER: Thank you, Councilman Greenlee. I think Gail has covered very well in answer to your question, but it's a good question, because we often are associated with only dealing with public schools in the City of Philadelphia, and we're proud of that, but we also are dealing with private, parochial and charter schools. And there's school visits and after-school art clubs, as Gail mentioned, studio art classes.

The Education Department has a tremendous number of programs going on, and we don't want to take up this limited time this afternoon by telling you about all of them. We don't have a lot of time, but it is very good to remind you that that Education Department is extremely active, and as Gail said in her testimony, 90,000 students. And we do want to remind you that we also have partnerships with community groups like Taller Puertorriqueno, Art Sanctuary, the Southeast Community Art Center, and we are dealing with accessibility for a number of people. One in particular that I want to tell you about has to do with people who are homebound, who can't come physically to the Art Museum, and through a program up through a telephone art appreciation program, they actually learn about and hear about and participate in a conversation concerning art. So that's just --

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Great idea.

MS. McCLENNEY-BROOKER: It is,

and it's a very successful program.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. I think you answered that question. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

I'd like to offer an invitation to my colleague, Councilman Bill Green.

I had the great fortune to attend an after-school arts program a few years ago, and commend you enormously for the breadth of work that you do in our schools, and in many ways it's important to know when we consider the fact that many of our public schools don't have arts and culture programming. So to the extent that arts and culture institutions can reach into those doors, that's an important thing.

Let me also commend you on the

improvement you've made and progress you've made in offering both women and people of color an opportunity to do business with the Museum, since we know those doors are open all the time. And I appreciate your recognition of what is indeed a shared sacrifice for the City as we seek to get our arms around this financial crisis. When I hear you say that your reductions are cut to the bone with 30 positions eliminated, a cut in hours and a reduced salary, that is certainly all that we must consider. I would offer, however, my statement as follows: We also know that every $1 spent by the Museum yields $4 in economic activity. So you really do put heads in beds when it comes to filling up hotel rooms, restaurants, taxis, parking, et cetera.

So I'll close simply by saying after losing so much this past year, we still do need what you bring to the City, because you give us a return on the investment. So I want to thank both you, your staff, Cheryl McClenney-Brooker and Bill Valerio, for being the face of the Museum at many of the events we see around the City of Philadelphia, and I am hereby urging my colleagues and the Administration to restore funding to the previous levels as soon as we come out of this financial crisis. And let me underscore that. As soon as we come out of this financial crisis. Again, because for every $1 that's spent, we see a $4 yield.

The Art Museum is known because it is a cultural gem and a destination that makes us all very, very proud, and I am confident and hopeful that our Mayor and our czar for the arts in our city, our Chief Cultural Officer, Gary Steuer, will certainly understand this importance.

Thank you all for your testimony and your important work.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you for your kind comments.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're welcome.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is Councilman Jones there? I can't see.

No.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

The Art Museum is another example of what we talk about for mural arts and other programs that do such a great job in raising their own money in trying to support themselves and yet request City support. It is real important. I heard what our colleague asked about them being able to get this program started without the money they need, and certainly it is well needed, well deserved. We appreciate their contribution to our city, and we certainly hope that we can help them, and we support that.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

If 54 percent of the Keystone Project qualifies for federal stimulus money, that means you can spend it within a certain amount of time. Do you know what amount of time that is?

MS. HARRITY: Yeah. I think if -- I believe it's roughly 50 percent, not 54, and I might ask --

(Witness approached witness table.)

MR. RAMBO: Bob Rambo, the CFO

for the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

We have looked at our project and looked at early releases of certain components of the project so that we can start construction much earlier than we would had the stimulus package not been available to us so that we --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, it's not available yet.

MR. RAMBO: Yeah. That's right. Well, it's available. We just haven't qualified yet, but we're hopeful that we will. And we feel confident that we can spend at least 50 percent within the time period, within the next -- starting as early as late August and we can spend that through the next 18 months.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Eighteen months, 50 percent. So $35 million in 18 months. How many jobs would that create?

MR. RAMBO: I think the total jobs that we're projecting was 850.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Eight

hundred and fifty jobs. Do you know what those jobs would pay the City of Philadelphia in wage tax and do you know what the business privilege tax that would be paid by the contractors to the City of Philadelphia during that two-year period would be?

MR. RAMBO: I don't have that information, but certainly we could make some calculation.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: If you would please do so, because I think what we're going to find is that the interest expense on an additional million dollars is less than the tax revenue to the City as a result of going forward with this project in the short term, and we need to get Philadelphians to work. And so I know you're making the case with the federal government, but I would urge you to come back to City Council and make the case in time for us to amend the capital plan if the numbers bear out as we suspect.

MR. RAMBO: We certainly will.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And also you're the CFO. Do you happen to know if the 70 million is at risk if we wait five years?

MR. RAMBO: We would have to get back and examine all of the grant agreements. I think I'm pretty confident there is time limits on certain of them. The question is could we go back and have those extended. So I can't answer that at this point. We'd have to see.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: What are the endowments worth of people who offered you the money today versus three years ago, would be the answer to that question.

Thank you.

MR. RAMBO: You're welcome.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Is Councilman Rizzo in the room?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Gail, can you tell us how many automobiles can be accommodated in the new parking facility?

MS. HARRITY: There are spaces for 440 cars, which is a substantial increase to the number of parking spaces around the terrace of the Museum.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's wonderful. Again, we really commend you and everybody involved in doing such a fabulous job.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you so much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you for your support.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have -- oh, Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Sorry, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's okay.

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COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Sorry about the delay. Again, I just want to chime in with everybody else that you guys do a great job there. And it's interesting, when I travel and meet people, they don't tell me about Pat's Steaks or Geno's. They tell me about the great time they had in visiting the Museum. So I want you to know that.

Just an observation, because I was kind of worried myself a little bit about it, but every time I come around the circle, the line, no matter if it's 10 o'clock at night or 11 o'clock at night, at the Rocky statue, I'm so happy that you guys worked that out and I think it's in an appropriate place, but I think it's really been a lot of fun for a lot of people, to see the flashes going off at 10 o'clock at night and there's 20 people lined up to take pictures. So thanks for being so flexible on that one. I think it's really a neat asset to the Museum.

MS. HARRITY: And we agree. We think it's terrific, and we may launch an advertising campaign that has somebody at the top of the stairs with arms lifted saying, I've just seen say Cezanne.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I know you guys aren't in this kind of business, but I'd like to get the concession to have a photographer there. You're not old enough to remember, but I do, when the pony would come through the neighborhood and you'd take a picture. You guys ought to set up a business there just people without cameras to take pictures. You'd make a zillion dollars.

MS. HARRITY: It is spectacular. We think it's terrific. It was a win-win.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Again, thanks, everybody, for the great work you do there.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You can't get away that easily.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you very much.

I just wanted to on the record say that I am truly pleased with the Art Museum's effort to expand art and art appreciation to public schools, particularly in my district and around the City of Philadelphia. In a debate about budgets and what our priorities should be, there is no debate that art enriches the lives of our young people by the experience of it. It should not be just a wealthy person's experience, but to the common person and to individuals who can be transformed by the art. I think it is an excellent program. You reach out. You assist teachers in helping them both in person by visits to the Art Museum, but teleconference equipment and using a virtual classroom, if you would, to enhance the experience for students. I think it's the best cheap date in the City of Philadelphia to go and experience Cezanne and some of the classic artists, and I just appreciate the enrichment that the Museum provides for our city, and I wanted to get on the record saying that.

One of the first tours we took in our early time of the freshmen was of the Art Museum, and we have been transformed because of it. One of the things that I wanted to make sure happens is that some of the projects that you're working on, ambitious projects, to improve the capital infrastructure of the actual Museum are considered by the City of Philadelphia as turnkey, shovel-ready projects that should have been and can still be considered under the stimulus package, and I wanted to put that on the record as well and get your feedback on that.

MS. HARRITY: Terrific. Well, I very much appreciate your comments. You are very articulate in expressing really the Museum's mission to provide art to all people of all ages from all walks of life, because it is a transformative experience. And with regard to maintaining the Museum, not only the fine collections within it, but the infrastructure that holds it and cares for it, we appreciate your support, because these projects are vital to the success of the Museum going forward and to our ability to continue to provide great programs for generations to come.

COUNCILMAN JONES: In a post-apocalyptic economy, people are inventing new types of vacations called staycations where you actually stay in the region and experience whatever limited recreation you can based on what your money can buy, and a staycation should always include the option of going to the Art Museum and I just think it's an excellent venue by which people can experience locally.

MS. HARRITY: Well, in

anticipation of more staycations in the current economy, we are adjusting our marketing program, because so many of our current exhibitions, both international loan exhibitions and permanent collection exhibitions, are focused on works from France. So, for example, the Cezanne and Beyond, but also a just-opened exhibition of works from our permanent collection of costume and textiles called Shopping in Paris, or another painting exhibition of works by the artist Henri Matisse. And so we are encouraging people to go to France, visit France in Philadelphia and see the great collections.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm more a Monet man myself, but I'll consider that as an option.

Thank you, Madam President.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you so much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Any further questions?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing none, thank you very much.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: This will conclude our public hearings for today. The hearings will be continued until tomorrow, Wednesday, April the 22nd at 10:00 a.m.

Thank you.

(Committee of the Whole recessed at 2:55 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings, evidence and objections are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the foregoing matter on April 21, 2009, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

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MICHELE L. MURPHY

RPR-Notary Public

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