

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

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, June 18, 2013
3:15 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, CHAIR
COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

BILL 130412 - An ordinance amending Title 15 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Parks and Recreation," by adding a new Chapter requiring an Impact Statement, Cost Estimate and Escrow for Repair, before the issuance of any permit or license to use certain parks...

BILL 130459 - An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation and the Water Commissioner, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to enter into a lease with the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development...

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COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

3

afternoon. This hearing is called to

4

order. This is a public hearing of the

5

City Council Committee on Parks,

6

Recreation and Cultural Affairs. The

7

purpose of this public hearing is to hear

8

testimony on Bills No. 130412 and 130459.

9

I want to recognize the

10

presence of a quorum of City Council

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Committee members. Members of the

12

Committee in attendance are Councilwoman

13

Blondell Reynolds Brown, Councilwoman

14

Maria Quinones-Sanchez, and Councilman

15

Darrell Clarke and Councilman Bill

16

Greenlee.

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Would any of the Councilmembers

18

present have an opening remark, have any

19

opening remarks?

20

(No response.)

21

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Why don't

22

we have the Clerk now read the title of

23

Bill No. 130412.

24

THE CLERK: Bill No. 130412, an

25

ordinance amending Title 15 of The

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 Philadelphia code, entitled "Parks and
3 Recreation," by adding a new Chapter
4 requiring an Impact Statement, Cost
5 Estimate and Escrow for Repairs, before
6 the issuance of any permit or license to
7 use certain parks or recreation
8 facilities, under certain terms and
9 conditions.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
11 very much.

12 We're going to call the first
13 panel up to testify. And while we're
14 waiting for them to come forward, I know
15 Councilman Greenlee wanted to make some
16 remarks.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
18 you, Madam Chair. I just want to make
19 clear the purpose behind this bill. Last
20 year when Made in America came to the
21 Parkway, overall it was a successful
22 event, handled extremely well by the City
23 of Philadelphia. One of the areas that
24 they used was Von Colln Field, which is
25 at 22nd and Pennsylvania Avenue. With

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 all the equipment on there, the field was
3 pretty much destroyed. Last year, quite
4 frankly, that was not an issue because
5 the field was to undergo renovations
6 anyway. So, if anything, that just kind
7 of sped up the process.

8 This year is different.
9 Through Council President Clarke,
10 \$300,000 was allocated to Von Colln
11 Field. If anybody sees that field now, I
12 would dare say they would be very
13 impressed. It's used by the Fairmount
14 Sports Association, among other people.
15 They have leagues running all summer.
16 They do a great job there. And it's just
17 not a Fairmount league, although being
18 from Fairmount, I'm kind of proud it's
19 called the Fairmount Sports Association,
20 but it has kids from all over the area.
21 And if that field is used again as it was
22 this past time for Made in America, it
23 would be a disaster for that field. It
24 would basically just destroy it again,
25 and all that good City money that was put

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 into it would be basically wasted after
3 just one year.

4 So what this bill attempts to
5 do -- let me make clear, what the Council
6 President and I would like to see is an
7 agreement, a letter from the
8 Administration basically saying that Von
9 Colln Field will be off limits to Made in
10 America. If that's not the case, then
11 this bill would mandate that there be
12 various measures taken by those that will
13 be using the field, which would include a
14 cost estimate ahead of time, double the
15 amount, 200 percent, of the cost estimate
16 for restoration or repair put forward,
17 and have the field totally fixed in 24
18 hours. Is that a big ask? Absolutely,
19 but we think the easier ask is just don't
20 use the field, and then everything I
21 think will go on very well.

22 And, again, I want to make
23 clear that this is not an effort in any
24 way to hinder Made in America. I live in
25 that community. I'm a supporter of Made

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 in America. I thought it went well last
3 year, and I think it will be a great
4 event for the City of Philadelphia, but
5 it should not be at the expense of this
6 field and the people that use it.

7 So with that, Madam Chair,
8 thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
10 Thank you, Councilman.

11 And is there anyone here to
12 testify on behalf of this bill?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Any
15 additional comments from Councilmembers?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
18 And that concludes testimony on Bill No.
19 130412.

20 Can we have the Clerk now read
21 the title of Bill 130459.

22 THE CLERK: Bill No. 130459, an
23 ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of
24 Parks and Recreation and the Water
25 Commissioner, on behalf of the City of

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 Philadelphia, to enter into a lease with
3 the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial
4 Development ("PAID"), under which the
5 City would lease the East Park Reservoir
6 West Basin and adjacent park land (the
7 "Premises") to PAID, and pursuant to
8 which PAID would enter into a sublease
9 for the Premises with the East Park
10 Leadership and Conservation Center, a
11 Pennsylvania non-profit corporation
12 formed by the Philadelphia Outward Bound
13 Center and The National Audubon Society,
14 all under certain terms and conditions.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I want to
16 make a note that copies of an amended
17 lease agreement, along with a copy of the
18 required EOP, have been circulated to
19 members of the Committee.

20 And if we could have the first
21 panel called to testify.

22 THE CLERK: Mark Focht.
23 (Witness approached witness
24 table.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 afternoon.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:

4 Good afternoon.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please

6 state your name for the record and

7 proceed with your testimony.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:

9 Good afternoon, Chairwoman Bass and
10 members of the City Council Committee on
11 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs.

12 I am Mark Focht, First Deputy
13 Commissioner for Philadelphia Parks and
14 Recreation, and on behalf of Deputy Mayor
15 Michael DiBerardinis, I'm here today to
16 present testimony in support of Bill No.
17 130459, which authorizes the Parks and
18 Recreation Commissioner and the Water
19 Department Commissioner, on behalf of the
20 City of Philadelphia, to enter into a
21 lease with the Philadelphia Authority for
22 Industrial Development, under which the
23 City would lease the East Park Reservoir
24 West Basin and adjacent park land to
25 PAID, and pursuant to which PAID would

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 enter into a sublease for the Premises
3 for the East Park Leadership and
4 Conservation Center, otherwise known as
5 EPLACC, a Pennsylvania non-profit
6 corporation formed by Philadelphia
7 Outward Bound Center and The National
8 Audubon Society, under certain terms and
9 conditions.

10 Parks and Recreation, formerly
11 Fairmount Park, has been working with The
12 National Audubon Society and Audubon
13 Pennsylvania since 2001 to select a site
14 and establish a state-of-the-art urban
15 environmental education center. At the
16 same time, Parks and Recreation has
17 enjoyed a long relationship with Outward
18 Bound and the exemplary outdoor
19 skill-building programs they offer. In
20 fact, Outward Bound is currently a tenant
21 of several locations in East and West
22 Fairmount Park as well as Wissahickon
23 Valley Park. We are pleased that Audubon
24 and Outward Bound have come together to
25 form the East Park Leadership and

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 Conservation Center.

3 EPLACC would be sited on a
4 portion of the East Park Reservoir along
5 33rd Street in Strawberry Mansion. The
6 reservoir was built in 1890 and is today
7 maintained by the Philadelphia Water
8 Department. The reservoir's West Basin
9 has been out of use for several decades.
10 Along with surrounding lands, the 50-acre
11 site presents an extraordinarily unique
12 environment in the City of Philadelphia.
13 The entire Fairmount Park system is
14 nationally recognized as one of only
15 several important bird areas as
16 designated by Audubon National. A
17 significant contributing factor to the
18 IBA designation is the West Basin of the
19 East Park Reservoir and the nearly 150
20 bird species from along the Atlantic
21 migratory flyway that hosts the site --
22 that the site hosts each year.

23 Parks and Recreation staff,
24 particularly Director of Environmental
25 Education, Debbie Carr, who is here

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 today, and I, along with our colleagues
3 at the Philadelphia Water and Law
4 Departments, have worked closely with
5 EPLACC's leadership over the past few
6 years to bring this exciting project and
7 lease agreement before this Committee and
8 Council.

9 Shortly you will hear from the
10 leadership, both the President and Vice
11 President of the East Park Association.
12 They will provide details about EPLACC
13 and the project itself. They have
14 developed a public access plan for the
15 site and an Equal Opportunity Plan, which
16 has been approved both by their board and
17 the Office of Economic Opportunity.

18 In closing, I'm requesting this
19 Committee's favorable consideration of
20 Bill No. 130459, and I ask that the rules
21 be suspended so the ordinance may be
22 passed upon the second reading of
23 Council.

24 I'd be happy to answer any
25 questions you may have at this time.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 Thank you very much.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
4 for being here.

5 Do we have any questions from
6 the panel?

7 The Chair recognizes --

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: This is
9 his district, right?

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me
12 yield.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: You
14 represent us all, Councilwoman. Go
15 ahead.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
17 Councilman Jones.

18 So please share with me what
19 type of guidance you offer to those who
20 want to do business with the City when it
21 comes to the completion of the EOP plan.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: We
23 directed -- in this case, we directed the
24 combination of Audubon and Outward Bound
25 to the Office of Economic Opportunity,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 introduced them to the office, made the
3 connection and helped them facilitate
4 that conversation to work on the EOP,
5 which was subsequently signed by the
6 board of the association that would lease
7 the land and approved by the OEO.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And when
9 you say "facilitate," that means what?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: We
11 introduced them. We literally made the
12 connections between who would be the
13 tenants, the leadership at Audubon and
14 Outward Bound, and the staff at OEO.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So the
16 ball is in the court of those group of
17 professionals to determine what the goals
18 will be?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
20 Correct, to negotiate the goals.
21 Correct.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
23 then. Thank you.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
25 You're welcome.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
3 Madam Chairwoman.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
5 Council Lady.

6 The Chair recognizes Councilman
7 Jones.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
9 Madam Chair.

10 First of all, I am very excited
11 about the prospect of this project. I
12 know sometimes elected officials can seem
13 like a boil on the butt of progress, but
14 it's all meant to be a better product at
15 the end of the day for everyone, the
16 Administration, the respective
17 departments, those investing considerable
18 amount of capital funds into a stranded
19 asset, if you would, but also for the
20 community. And I can just tell you that
21 my feedback, having met with the Audubon
22 Society and met with individuals from the
23 community, everybody is just excited.
24 The idea of being able to track migratory
25 birds from other parts of my district up

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 at the other reservoir down to this
3 reservoir, going further south down to
4 the Heinz Wildlife Reserve is just
5 strictly non-urban. I mean, but we are
6 adding an urban component.

7 The idea of having a classroom
8 where young people can learn about birds
9 that fly over them every day is just
10 astounding.

11 My only concerns were the
12 length of the lease, which we've worked
13 out, and some of the renewable options,
14 which were technical, we worked out. So
15 I want to say to my colleagues that I
16 think this complements Philadelphia's
17 being the greenest city and parks and
18 rec. We have a great Chair of this
19 Committee, but when you talk about the
20 4th Councilmanic District, we're excited.
21 You're going to complement the Zoo which
22 is there. You're complementing Please
23 Touch which is there, the Japanese House,
24 the Mann Music Center. You look -- and I
25 learned all this from you, Commissioner,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 so beware. So we have the first frisbee
3 park there.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: You
5 do.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: We have
7 Benedict Arnold's Mansion.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: You
9 do.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I think
11 all of these things contribute to the
12 vitality of our city.

13 So I'm very excited about it
14 and wanted to say that on the record.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
16 Thank you, Councilman.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good.
18 Thank you.

19 Do you have another question,
20 Councilwoman?

21 MR. BROWN: No.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
23 Thank you very much for your testimony.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
25 Thank you very much.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: If we could
3 have the Clerk call up the next panel.

4 THE CLERK: Katie Newsom
5 Pastuszek, Philip Wallis, and Lauren
6 Bornfriend.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
10 thank you for being here today. Before
11 we proceed with your testimony, I do want
12 to recognize the presence formally of
13 Councilman Jones, who already made
14 comments, but also Councilman Bobby
15 Henon.

16 And with that, if you want to
17 state your name for the record and then
18 proceed with your testimony.

19 MS. PASTUSZEK: Thank you very
20 much. I am Katie Newsom Pastuszek. I'm
21 the President of the organization we
22 fondly call EPLACC and the Executive
23 Director of the Philadelphia Outward
24 Bound School. I'm here with my colleague
25 Philip Wallis, who is the Vice President

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 of EPLACC and Executive Director of
3 Audubon Pennsylvania and a Vice President
4 of The National Audubon Society. It is a
5 great pleasure to be here to speak with
6 you, Councilwomen and Councilmen, and I
7 should start by saying that we are very
8 excited about this project and the
9 opportunity to engage all of you in what
10 is going to become a monumental step in
11 the environmental education world for the
12 City of Philadelphia.

13 EPLACC is a Pennsylvania
14 non-profit organization formed as a
15 partnership between two world-renowned
16 organizations, Outward Bound and The
17 National Audubon Society. It is formed
18 in particular to preserve one of the
19 City's ecological gemstones as a wildlife
20 sanctuary and to provide a continuum of
21 educational and adventure activities to
22 inspire self-discovery, promote shared
23 responsibility, and multiply connections
24 across the City of Philadelphia and
25 beyond.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 Councilman Jones has a staff
3 member who is an Outward Bound alum from
4 Beeber Middle School in your district,
5 and we have a number of schools that are
6 already engaged with Outward Bound across
7 the City of Philadelphia in just about
8 every councilmanic district in the City.
9 So Outward Bound has been operating for
10 quite a long time in the City and in
11 Fairmount Park, and we're thrilled to be
12 joining in partnership with the Audubon
13 Society.

14 I think you all know that
15 research shows that outdoor activities
16 increase children's physical activity.
17 They help children deal more effectively
18 with stress, and they reduce anxiety.
19 Furthermore, children who interact with
20 nature have better cognitive and creative
21 skills than their housebound
22 counterparts. Audubon and Outward Bound
23 programs use outdoor classrooms and
24 experiential education strategies to
25 produce significant student academic

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 gains in social studies, science,
3 language arts, and math, and, most
4 importantly, evidence indicates that
5 individuals who are active and engaged
6 with natural places lead healthier lives,
7 live longer, and have a better quality of
8 life.

9 We plan to build a
10 state-of-the-art educational center to
11 serve as the portal to the lake and,
12 through our programs, offer natural
13 exploration experiences for visitors of
14 all ages. Our intention is to bring
15 people into the park. And as Councilman
16 Jones stated earlier, we see this as
17 opening up the avenue of adventure in
18 Philadelphia.

19 I also want to point out that
20 we will continue to connect with the
21 existing community assets, and I do mean
22 community assets, in East Fairmount Park,
23 such as Smith Memorial Playground, the
24 Sedgley Woods Disc Golf Course, the
25 Boxers' Trail, Mander Recreation Center,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 among others. We intend to be a part of
3 the welcoming gateway to Fairmount Park
4 and to engage Strawberry Mansion and the
5 Strawberry Mansion community and all of
6 the neighborhoods surrounding that
7 region.

8 We will offer public access to
9 the lake in alignment with public safety
10 and protection of the site as a bird and
11 wildlife sanctuary, and we have completed
12 a public access plan that is an exhibit
13 to the sublease. There will be no
14 entrance fees to public viewing areas to
15 observe the birds and the wildlife on the
16 lake.

17 On behalf of the young people
18 and adults that Audubon and Outward Bound
19 serve today and plan to serve tomorrow,
20 we thank you for your leadership and your
21 vision to make this possible.

22 Thank you very much.

23 Phil.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
25 for your testimony.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 And if you would like to state
3 your name for the record, sir, and please
4 begin.

5 MR. WALLIS: Yes. My name is
6 Phil Wallis. I'm Executive Director of
7 Audubon Pennsylvania and Vice President
8 of EPLACC. Good afternoon, Chairwoman
9 Bass and Councilwomen and Councilmen. I
10 am honored to speak with you today about
11 this unique opportunity for Philadelphia.
12 It was many years ago that the City
13 actually seized the opportunity, thanks
14 to William Penn and the founding fathers
15 and mothers of this great city, to create
16 Fairmount Park. This special place is
17 not only inspiring, it is unique in this
18 very world. It is an important bird
19 area, as designated by National Audubon
20 Society. Literally the birds have found
21 a special place. And we want to open
22 this up to the wonders and minds and
23 hearts of the children and adults and
24 families of Philadelphia. That's our
25 goal.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 The location for the East Park
3 Leadership and Conservation Center is the
4 on West Basin of the East Park Reservoir.
5 And I think, as you all know, it
6 functions as a reservoir today, a storage
7 facility for some of the water of
8 Philadelphia. It encompasses
9 approximately 37 acres, and it was
10 formerly under the jurisdiction of the
11 Philadelphia Water Department, and it was
12 not open to the public. The lease of
13 these premises, as described in the
14 ordinance now before City Council, will
15 provide an exceptional opportunity for
16 young people to experience nature in a
17 highly urbanized environment.

18 The site is also one, as I've
19 said, of several nationally designated
20 urban important bird areas. It is home
21 to nearly 150 different species of birds.
22 It's really quite extraordinary. And
23 just the other day when we were out
24 there, we saw a bald eagle come right
25 over us as we're out there with the

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 donors that we hope will continue to
3 underwrite this wonderful project. So it
4 was a pretty incredible calling that
5 occurred on that very day.

6 This deep water source provides
7 the safe haven and habitat for many
8 deep-diving ducks and water birds along
9 the Atlantic migratory flyway, a wonder
10 which can be shared with all who visit.
11 And indeed when we open up the gates, as
12 you all have been there, it's a wonder to
13 see.

14 There are three benefits that I
15 want to just briefly touch on. The first
16 are the environmental benefits, which
17 I've summarized, but this public access
18 to a 50-acre gem will project a body of
19 water that could have been drained. This
20 would have been a travesty for birds and
21 wildlife in the City. That is not going
22 to happen. We're very confident of that.
23 But the very first and foremost thing for
24 Audubon is to protect this incredible
25 environmental gem.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 The second is really education.

3 It's about the kids of this great city,
4 who really do not get to enjoy the
5 things, Councilman Jones, that you talked
6 about. How many get down to the Tinicum
7 Wildlife Refuge? I don't know. How many
8 get to the different parts of Fairmount
9 Park? This place is now gated and we
10 want to open that up. So there's a
11 tremendous educational benefit that will
12 occur here.

13 And the last I know is all so
14 important to us, are the economic and
15 civic benefits. We have a wonderful
16 city. I was born here, very proud to be
17 a resident of Philadelphia. This is the
18 type of jewel that we have here in
19 Philadelphia that we can share with the
20 City and with the world.

21 Katie and I, together with many
22 business, civic, and community leaders
23 who are volunteering their time to bring
24 this project to life, want to thank
25 Council President Darrell Clarke,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 Councilman Curtis Jones, whose district
3 this is in, and Councilwoman Cindy Bass
4 for leading this committee and all of the
5 members of City Council's Committee on
6 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs
7 for giving us the opportunity to testify
8 before you today.

9 We also want to thank
10 representatives of the Department of
11 Parks and Recreation, who have been a
12 staunch supporter of ours, as has been
13 the Philadelphia Water Department.
14 Indeed, today we also have a member of
15 the Strawberry Mansion Community
16 Development Corporation. Tonetta Graham
17 I think is back here. I want to thank
18 her and all the other members of the
19 community that have been involved with us
20 to think through what public access and
21 programming might be for the children of
22 Philadelphia.

23 We invite you to join us in
24 bringing this dream to reality and adding
25 yet another unique world-class asset to

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 the City of Philadelphia.

3 We respectfully urge the
4 Councilmembers of this Committee and the
5 Committee of the Whole to approve this
6 ordinance.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
9 very much.

10 Lauren, would you like to join
11 the panel so we can hear your testimony.

12 Good afternoon.

13 MS. BORNFRIEND: Good
14 afternoon, Councilwoman Bass and members
15 of Council. My name is Lauren
16 Bornfriend. I'm the Executive Director
17 of the Philadelphia Parks Alliance.

18 I am here to give testimony in
19 support of Bill No. 130459 concerning a
20 proposed lease for the East Park
21 Leadership and Conservation Center in
22 Fairmount Park. The Parks Alliance
23 believes that Audubon/Outward Bound's
24 collaborative project is an excellent one
25 and that it will preserve not only a

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 man-made lake that has become a sanctuary
3 for migratory birds and wildlife, but
4 that it will offer outstanding
5 programming while creating an exciting
6 and important new amenity for Strawberry
7 Mansion, East Fairmount Park, and the
8 City of Philadelphia.

9 Through a series of discussions
10 with Audubon and Outward Bound and in
11 comments submitted to the Commission on
12 Parks and Recreation, the Parks Alliance
13 has very strongly expressed our view that
14 rigorous implementation of Philadelphia's
15 new Open Lands Protection Ordinance is
16 critical to ensuring that there is no net
17 loss of park land and that recreation and
18 open spaces that make Philadelphia such a
19 great place to work and live and play are
20 protected. To that point, the Alliance
21 has, as these guys know, expressed our
22 concern that the Center provide
23 sufficient access and enjoyment to the
24 general public, free of charge, in a
25 continuation of park use.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 That said, the Parks Alliance
3 extend our thanks to Audubon and Outward
4 Bound for listening and responding to our
5 comments and those of other stakeholders,
6 including community groups, citizens, and
7 leadership in Strawberry Mansion, as
8 reflected in their May 2013 draft public
9 access plan.

10 The Alliance is pleased that
11 public access has been -- plan has been
12 attached to the lease as an exhibit. We
13 recommend that it be incorporated by
14 reference into the lease and that
15 adherence to the terms of the access plan
16 be made a binding and enforceable
17 condition of the lease.

18 We also thank Audubon and
19 Outward Bound for their substantial
20 efforts to make this extremely special
21 project a reality. It has not been easy.
22 And we look forward to working with them,
23 Parks and Recreation, the Water
24 Department, the Commission, and
25 government officials in any way that we

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 are able to help make this project as
3 great a project as it can be, to keep it
4 compatible with park use, and to maximize
5 public access.

6 Thank you very much.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Just very
8 quickly -- Madam Chair, may I? I'm
9 sorry.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes. The
11 Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Two quick
13 questions. One, a part of the lease is
14 remediation of whatever water issues may
15 be there. Has that been squared away
16 between the Water Department and
17 Fairmount Park and the lessee?

18 Somebody needs to come and say
19 it on the record.

20 (Witness approached witness
21 table.)

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER McCARTY:
23 Good afternoon. My name is Debra
24 McCarty. I'm Deputy Commissioner of the
25 Water Department. And regarding your

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 question with the water concerns, we do
3 appreciate you looking out for us, by the
4 way.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's what
6 I do.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER McCARTY:
8 But, yes. Audubon -- we've been working
9 with Parks and Rec and Audubon for a long
10 time, and we have resolved any issues
11 that we would have with their project and
12 we have more than enough room on the
13 other side of the wall. So we're looking
14 forward to a long partnership with them.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: And then,
16 number two, a security/safety plan for
17 the public to make sure that that is
18 submitted to the Chair of this Committee
19 as well as to myself as Chair of Public
20 Safety, have we done that yet or in the
21 process of doing that?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: No.
23 We've requested that Audubon and Outward
24 Bound develop that security plan. It's
25 not yet been submitted.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: In light of
3 a number of federally mandated access
4 issues to our Water Department as well,
5 we'd like to be cognizant of what those
6 plans and safeguards are.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
8 Understood.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
10 Thank you, Madam Chair.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
12 very much.

13 The Chair recognizes
14 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
16 Good afternoon. And so you all
17 can decide who is most appropriate to
18 answer. Mr. Wallis said that you're
19 honored to be here to offer this
20 testimony. I would say that we're
21 honored to have this unique experience
22 come to Philadelphia, and particularly to
23 the district where I live, in Councilman
24 Jones' area.

25 I'm pleased also to see that

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 considerable thought has been given to
3 ensuring public access. That matters for
4 experiences like this. And so to know
5 that you're already looking at
6 after-school programming and the like for
7 young people in that community is
8 amazing. And what I would ask you to put
9 on your radar screen as a board is to
10 look to see where you can cultivate
11 relationships with the public schools in
12 that area who probably are in walking
13 distance but have never been to have that
14 type of experience.

15 Secondly, is this the first
16 time wherein your organization as a board
17 has had to work through MBE/WBE
18 participation?

19 (Witnesses nod head in
20 affirmative.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: This is a
22 first? So help me understand what
23 strategies you have in place or what
24 strategies the board is thinking about to
25 ensure attainment of these goals that

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 you've put in this document.

3 MR. WALLIS: I'll give a crack
4 at that. Again, this is our first time
5 having done this. The team we've
6 assembled has advised us that there are a
7 couple aspects about this. One is to
8 make sure that we do a very robust and
9 comprehensive solicitation of all those
10 vendors, contractors that might be
11 appropriate and qualified to be bidding
12 on this, and we know there are a lot of
13 different contractors, engineers, and
14 construction companies that will be
15 involved. So number one is
16 identification and solicitation of those
17 individuals.

18 And then the other is to set up
19 a fair and thoughtful criteria for
20 evaluating those amongst the board and
21 with other participation. And then
22 ultimately we want to be held
23 accountable, hold ourselves accountable
24 to meeting those goals that we've put in
25 there that we aspire to achieve.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So will
3 the board be executing all those steps
4 you just mentioned or are you going to
5 hand that off to a consultant
6 professional who will be responsible for
7 the achievement of these goals?

8 MR. WALLIS: I think it's fair
9 to say it will probably be both, that the
10 board will be involved in that as well as
11 that entity that will be helping us to
12 manage this complex project.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: In matters
14 like this, is there any role for the
15 Water Department given the uniqueness of
16 this enterprise? Is there any role for
17 the Water Department? I guess that
18 question will go to the Deputy
19 Commissioner.

20 Given the uniqueness of this
21 enterprise and the type of MBE/WBE
22 enterprises you require or needed -- not
23 required, but needed to ensure, is there
24 any role for the Water Department? I
25 don't know the answer. I'm asking.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER McCARTY:

3 Not that we're aware of. I mean, this is
4 more -- it is Parks and Recreation site.
5 We use a significant portion of it, but
6 they're really our landlord, so to speak.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER McCARTY:

9 But it is a partnership with Water and
10 Parks and Rec, but I'm not -- I mean, if
11 somebody has any ideas, we're always open
12 to working with anybody, but I'm not, off
13 the top of my head, aware of anything for
14 the --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: My
16 experience here is where you have firsts,
17 and this is a first, there is not always
18 an achievement of the goals, because it
19 is a first. You're figuring it out as
20 you go along. And so that's why I raised
21 the question. If it is a first for the
22 board, then I would think you would need
23 infrastructure in place as an
24 organization to ensure attainment of the
25 goals.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 MS. PASTUSZEK: It may be
3 helpful to know that this is a
4 partnership between two different and
5 distinct organizations coming into this
6 project, and the strength of this
7 partnership has been built upon other
8 engaged partners. So community partners
9 have been a vital part of this, and I
10 hope we'll have a chance to hear from
11 Tonetta Graham as well, and it is our
12 intention to spend the first few years
13 after the lease has been approved to
14 really map out the project and a
15 successful route for us to both complete
16 the fundraising -- most of this is
17 private funding -- and to determine some
18 of those new aspects like the Economic
19 Opportunity Plan. And I think it's fair
20 to say that we may call upon those who
21 have more experience in this field to
22 help us as we go forward. One of the
23 things that we have not been hesitant to
24 do is to ask for help.

25 So thank you very much for the

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 question, and hopefully we can call upon
3 you or someone in your office to help
4 guide us in that.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, that
6 triggers two more questions. One --

7 MS. PASTUSZEK: Whoops.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So you
9 need a planning period. So what's the
10 anticipated start date where you want to
11 launch this new initiative?

12 MS. PASTUSZEK: As soon as we
13 have completed the fundraising goals that
14 are outlined in the sublease document,
15 then we will be ready to start, and it is
16 within the first five years of the
17 approval of the lease.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right.
19 And then the last question is -- and this
20 will become a regular question that I ask
21 of all organizations -- is the
22 composition of your board.

23 MS. PASTUSZEK: So right now
24 the board of the East Park Leadership and
25 Conservation Center is comprised of six

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 members, three members representing
3 Outward Bound and three members
4 representing Audubon, and a seventh
5 member is yet to be appointed, and that
6 decision will be -- that position will be
7 appointed once the lease has been
8 approved and signed.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: How many
10 are women?

11 MS. PASTUSZEK: There are three
12 women.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very well.
14 And that one board captures the two
15 worlds that are sitting at the table?

16 MS. PASTUSZEK: Yes. That's
17 correct.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,
19 then. Well, like Councilman Jones, as a
20 former William Penn camper for many, many
21 years, this is a wonderful experience for
22 young people in that community and
23 Philadelphia citywide. So I extend to
24 you much success.

25 MS. PASTUSZEK: Thank you very

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 much. Thank you very much. Just a
3 correction, there are two women currently
4 serving on the board of EPLACC and four
5 men. Is that correct? We originally had
6 three and we are down to two, so...

7 I would just like to ask, if
8 it's possible, to see if we can confirm
9 that the proposed amended bill and the
10 revised sublease are accepted as
11 amendments to the bill. Is that
12 appropriate?

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.
14 What was your question?

15 MS. PASTUSZEK: Someone on the
16 panel should confirm that the proposed
17 amended bill and the revised sublease are
18 accepted as amendments to the bill.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, yes.
20 We'll get to that. We will get to that.
21 Thank you very much.

22 MS. PASTUSZEK: Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Let me just
24 see. Is there anyone else to testify on
25 behalf of this bill?

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And while
5 we're waiting, I do want to acknowledge
6 that we have been joined by Councilman
7 David Oh. Thank you.

8 Thank you. Please state your
9 name for the record and begin your
10 testimony.

11 MR. RUSSELL: Good afternoon,
12 Councilwoman Bass. My name is Keith
13 Russell. I am an Outreach Coordinator
14 here in Philadelphia for Audubon
15 Pennsylvania.

16 It's an honor to speak to you
17 today on behalf of a project that Audubon
18 and Outward Bound have been working on
19 for several years now, but Audubon's
20 interest in East Park Reservoir actually
21 began over a decade ago. And the reason
22 why a bird conservation organization like
23 Audubon originally became interested in
24 the reservoir is obviously because of the
25 birds, as Councilman Jones pointed out.

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2 Each year millions of birds
3 representing over 200 species migrate to
4 the City of Philadelphia traveling north
5 to their breeding grounds in the spring
6 and south to that their wintering grounds
7 in the fall. We know this in part
8 because of a research study that was
9 conducted last fall at the reservoir by
10 Audubon and a researcher from Fordham
11 University. During that study, a
12 portable radar unit was placed at the
13 reservoir for two weeks in order to count
14 all the birds that could be detected
15 migrating within a kilometer of the
16 reservoir at night, which is when the
17 vast majority of birds actually migrate.
18 During that two-week period in late
19 September, the radar unit detected over
20 735 individual birds migrating south
21 through a one-kilometer zone around the
22 reservoir. Based on this data, we've
23 estimated that the total number of birds
24 that migrate through Philadelphia each
25 year is probably in the tens of millions.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 Many of these migrating birds
3 stop to use Fairmount Park as a place to
4 rest and refuel during their migrations,
5 and the reservoir happens to be one of
6 the few places in the park where there is
7 a lot of water. So the reservoir
8 attracts a variety of different bird
9 species that need water, like ducks,
10 geese, as well as other kinds of water
11 birds and a large variety of land birds.
12 In fact, Fairmount Park has been
13 recognized, as Mark Focht pointed out
14 before, as an important bird area,
15 specifically because of the large variety
16 and concentration of migratory birds that
17 use the park each year.

18 But the lake at the reservoir
19 unique. It's the only large body of
20 water in Philadelphia that doesn't
21 receive any stormwater runoff or
22 pollution, so it's much cleaner than most
23 of the other large bodies of water in our
24 region, and it's also deeper and larger
25 than most of the other lakes in our

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 region. As a result, it attracts some
3 unusual species of birds like loons,
4 Canvasback ducks that only occur a few
5 places in the Philadelphia region.

6 So the birds are why Audubon
7 originally became interested in the site,
8 but the reason why we've continued to
9 work on this project for over a decade,
10 despite the many challenges associated
11 with it, is because of the opportunity to
12 make an ecological gem like this that has
13 been inaccessible for many years once
14 again accessible to the public,
15 especially the thousands of people who
16 live in Strawberry Mansion and other
17 neighborhoods near the reservoir.

18 Audubon and Outward Bound have
19 worked with many people, including many
20 residents of Strawberry Mansion, to bring
21 this project to where it is today, and
22 we're doing everything we can to make our
23 plans for the center meaningful to the
24 many people that it will serve while
25 ensuring that the reservoir will continue

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 to be a safe place for both people and
3 wildlife.

4 Over the last eight years, with
5 the assistance of the Philadelphia Water
6 Department, we've enjoyed showing the
7 reservoir to over 500 people who were
8 interested in our plans, including many
9 students from Philadelphia schools,
10 including those in Strawberry Mansion,
11 and it's always been inspiring to see how
12 positively young people in particular
13 were affected when they're exposed to the
14 natural world.

15 Everyone who sees the site is
16 impressed by its beauty and tranquility
17 and by the fact that it's an ideal
18 location for presenting both Audubon and
19 Outward Bound's unique programs that are
20 designed to serve young people, families,
21 seniors, and individuals of all ages. We
22 hope that you will also see this
23 collaboration between Audubon and Outward
24 Bound as an ideal one that will greatly
25 benefit the people of Philadelphia,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 especially those who live in Strawberry
3 Mansion, enhance the East Park section of
4 Fairmount Park, and be a source of pride
5 to the City as a whole.

6 And we would like to also --
7 I'd like to especially thank Councilman
8 Jones and Councilman Clarke for their
9 strong support of the project.

10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
12 very much for your testimony.

13 Would you like to state your
14 name for the record and then begin.

15 MS. GRAHAM: Yes. Hi. Good
16 afternoon. My name is Tonetta Graham.
17 Councilwoman Bass and Councilmembers, I
18 just want to say that not only are some
19 of you excited about this project, but
20 Strawberry Mansion residents are
21 extremely excited about this project.
22 It's been a long time coming, and we are
23 excited because we have an opportunity to
24 have access to a part of East Park which
25 was closed out for us for several years.

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2 We are encouraged by the plans
3 and have been engaged in this process
4 with Audubon and their new partners,
5 Outward Bound, for, as Keith mentioned,
6 almost over eight years now. And as
7 we've been meeting, myself, the
8 Strawberry Mansion CDC, the Strawberry
9 Mansion NAC, East Park Revitalization
10 Alliance, and several other groups in the
11 area have really come to really have a
12 strong support of this project and
13 appreciate the fact that we have been
14 included in all aspects of it and have
15 been invited to several of the tours.
16 The community outreach has been
17 excellent, and we also are very enthused
18 that this public access plan and all its
19 flexibility incorporates the
20 neighborhood, the neighborhood groups
21 that have been there from the beginning
22 and also our residents of all ages. We
23 see this as an intergenerational
24 opportunity not only for Strawberry
25 Mansion residents but for residents of

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 the City at-large, and we are just
3 really, really excited and we are very
4 much in support of the Audubon/Outward
5 Bound leadership in this lease.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Any questions for this panel?
10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
12 so much for your testimony.

13 Is there anyone else here to
14 testify on behalf of Bill No. 130459?
15 (Witness approached witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
18 afternoon. How are you? Please state
19 your name for the record and begin your
20 testimony.

21 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon.
22 My name is Judith Robinson. And I never
23 thought that I would be quoting from
24 President Reagan, but he said something I
25 think is very apropos, "Trust but

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 verify."

3 Now, regarding this project, I
4 too think it's a great project. I'm born
5 and raised in Strawberry Mansion, and I'm
6 of a certain age. Okay? So I remember
7 when this was an open space in our
8 community. People used it for
9 recreation, walking above the area where
10 this project will be and below the area
11 where it's just open space and we could
12 walk all around the reservoir.

13 Over about 30-some years ago,
14 the reservoir was shut off to the
15 community. Cumberland Street was changed
16 and paved over. So instead of being able
17 to go from the park straight through
18 Cumberland Street, it was shut down.
19 Some human being made the decision.
20 Because from the time I grew up in
21 Strawberry Mansion and was able to run
22 lovingly through the park and enjoy
23 everything that the park had to offer and
24 the time that I had my child and she was
25 able to come to the park, it was a

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 different environment, man-made
3 environment, shut off from the community.

4 Fast forward to the
5 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative.
6 We did planning in Strawberry Mansion,
7 and as some of you all will remember,
8 because you've been here long enough, I
9 attended every single meeting that was
10 convenient regarding the NTI, and we was
11 told about this project. Sort of they
12 gave an analogy that it would be like
13 Prospect Park in Brooklyn and it would be
14 a tourism attraction, et cetera.

15 So over this period of time,
16 which has been about 10 or 12 years, I
17 have been up on the reservoir area, but
18 what I'm concerned about is this: I am
19 noosy, so I'm going to find out about it.
20 I say tell everybody and let them decide
21 whether they want to come or not.
22 There's not enough notification. Okay?
23 And that concerns me, because as our
24 schools were being proposed to be closed
25 the heck down right in that same area,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 here we have this lovely project
3 springing up from the park, bird
4 watching, STEM, science, outdoor
5 activities, all of the things we need to
6 heal our community.

7 Let me say this, you all: I
8 came down here and I would have loved to
9 have been home relaxing in the rain, you
10 know, but I said I got to come down here
11 and say this. This project must include
12 the people, the students. I want to see
13 a document, okay, before we sign on to
14 anything. My background is where you
15 don't sign something until you read it
16 real well and then you don't have
17 amendments after the fact. That's why we
18 got a problem right now with African
19 American inclusion, because we don't get
20 in at the very beginning of the process.

21 I see this project as being
22 photography for those who don't want to
23 watch birds. I see it just a place to
24 walk around and pray if you dang well
25 choose or to do whatever you may choose

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 to do. There are going to be classroom
3 spaces. Who is going to be learning in
4 those classrooms? How are you shutting
5 down my Strawberry Mansion schools and
6 schools throughout North Philly from
7 Broad to 33rd and they don't know about
8 this project? That bothers me immensely.
9 That's why I came down here today to say
10 this: Can we get a document?

11 Keith, this brother here, I
12 respect him immensely. I want him to
13 know that I will be working with him,
14 because I'm thinking there's like
15 hundreds of Keith Russells. You know
16 what I mean? Somebody trained Keith
17 Russell.

18 Look, y'all got to go Google
19 question 21, is it? They talk about
20 everything. This brother hears bird
21 sounds and know which bird it is. He's
22 all that. But I know that there are many
23 Keith Russells in North Philly. He's
24 from Germantown, but we got that in North
25 Philly, and I will bring them to you,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 because -- I'm not this quiet person that
3 want to hope and wish that this one and
4 that one get it. I don't like the way
5 this is going down in this. It's too
6 much not telling the whole community. We
7 don't know the children who may be
8 interested in bird watching, who may wake
9 up early in the morning and hear the
10 birds that we don't hear. I want them to
11 know about this project, and they cannot
12 know about it with some half-baked hoping
13 and wishing and giving accolades. It's
14 not a project yet. Let's make it a
15 project by including the people from
16 North Philadelphia.

17 You know what, you all, I go to
18 the park now and I love the park. I
19 think the park is the reason why nobody
20 can get me out of North Philly. I swear.
21 Because it was my backyard as a child
22 before they shut the springs down and the
23 reservoir and all that. Robin Hood Dell,
24 all that, that was my -- you know, worms
25 in the dirt, whatever we did, picnics,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 that's why I love North Philly. I love
3 Strawberry Mansion. I love Fairmount
4 Park, and don't mind saying it, like the
5 land, yeah, because it means so much to
6 me. But if my grandson, who can read at
7 3 years old and loves the SEPTA
8 transportation and all this, if he cannot
9 get into this project because somehow
10 North Philly is being considered urban or
11 something so damn crazy, that we don't
12 like birds, we don't like outdoors, we
13 want in on this project and we want in on
14 it before a doggone anything is signed,
15 because I don't like what I see in the
16 park, to be quite frank with you. I see
17 a lot of activity going on. I see the
18 playground being -- play areas being
19 used, baseball courts, et cetera. We're
20 not limited to just basketball. And
21 there's some basketball sites out there.
22 Soccer is going on out there. You got
23 disc golf out there. You got the driving
24 range out there. Give me some of all of
25 that. Give me some of all of that for my

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 babies. Give me some of all of that. I
3 want every damn thing for my babies, and
4 that's why I'm here today, because I want
5 it in writing. I want it beforehand.
6 Yes, I want a special program. I'm
7 Strawberry Mansion Civic Association.
8 We're going to be doing something a
9 little bit different, because we're going
10 to include everybody. We're going to
11 make sure everybody knows. I will do
12 that, and I will do what other people are
13 not doing, because maybe you don't --
14 whatever reason. I will do it to make
15 sure that youth from my community will be
16 prepared to take advantage of this
17 process and this project.

18 There's talk about safety, and
19 I hear that. Access is very important.
20 Now, I tried to go back to -- because I
21 like to always have a document when I
22 speak so I make sure I'm coming at you
23 straight. Okay? I don't remember
24 hearing -- and somebody can correct me if
25 I'm wrong -- of anybody dying falling in

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 the reservoir. Maybe it happened at some
3 period of time. I heard of some people
4 dying in the river, and you ain't
5 blocking that off, and I got
6 documentation of that. We going to deal
7 with that later.

8 But we want our children
9 involved. I don't understand this
10 nonsense of the school was -- Strawberry
11 Mansion and Leslie Pinckney Hill were to
12 be closed down. Now all the sudden you
13 got all this flurry of activity. What
14 the hell is that all about? That's why
15 I'm here today, because I don't
16 understand it. So since I don't
17 understand it, I'm here today to say we
18 need to do something different right away
19 so, you know what, y'all don't have to
20 hear my mouth on a rainy day. All right?

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's all
22 right.

23 MS. ROBINSON: Could we just
24 please do that? Access, something in
25 writing to engage our youth in North

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 Philadelphia from Broad all the way to
3 33rd, all the schools. Everybody get a
4 little piece, and then we can decide who,
5 who and what, what when they decide they
6 want to come there or not.

7 And let me just say this in
8 closing. It almost remind me of some of
9 the stories we know in history where
10 people come to a community where there
11 are already people there who partake in
12 all of whatever is good in that community
13 and they say, Wow, you know, you got all
14 this good stuff going on here, you got
15 the lovely Fairmount Park and the river
16 and this and that. We know. We know.
17 That's why we're there. We're not there
18 because we just so darn poor that we
19 can't move. I'm there because I want to
20 be there. I need to be there. I need to
21 be able to say what maybe somebody else
22 cannot say. So I'm in my community
23 working very hard to have quality of
24 life, and all this stuff is going on, but
25 there's something wrong when it's not

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 connecting.

3 We're in planning for Year
4 2035. I hope and pray to God I'm there
5 in 2035, another 20-some years, but I
6 know by the grace of the creator that my
7 grandchildren will be there, 3 and 13,
8 and smart as can be, and they can partake
9 of all of this. So I want to make sure
10 that we are considering them.

11 In closing, just, you know,
12 please do that before we go too far.
13 Thank you so much.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
15 Thank you for coming today. I think that
16 you did bring up some very valid points,
17 and I'd like to ask Mr. Wallis to return
18 and also Ms. Newsom Pastuszek to just
19 address the community outreach plan and
20 what's going to be done, how is it going
21 to be done, how are we going to be
22 reaching out to the community to make
23 sure that folks know about what's going
24 to be happening, how do we get folks from
25 the neighborhood into that particular

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 part of the park to partake in what's
3 going to be happening.

4 (Witnesses approached witness
5 table.)

6 MR. WALLIS: I think we
7 probably both need to answer this, but I
8 will just start by saying right now as an
9 exhibit to the ordinance is that public
10 access plan. So we wanted to make sure
11 that this was free and open to the
12 public. That's number one.

13 The programs that we currently
14 do will be provided there. Between now
15 and when that commencement period begins,
16 in three to five years, it will be a lot
17 of work that we'll be doing with the
18 City, with the neighborhoods, with the
19 schools, with the public schools. Katie
20 I know will want to talk about her
21 involvement in the public schools right
22 now. It will be an emergent dynamic
23 process that we will engage a lot of
24 people in. Between now and three years
25 from now, we hope there's a lot more

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 going on with this project that we will
3 be able to deliver.

4 The framework for that program
5 we have created with input from the
6 community. The specificity of that is
7 not yet clear, simply because we're in
8 the process of raising the money over the
9 next three years to actually do the
10 project and program.

11 Katie.

12 MS. PASTUSZEK: The founders
13 that brought Outward Bound to
14 Philadelphia in 1992 brought this program
15 here specifically to serve young people
16 in the Philadelphia public and charter
17 schools across the City. We have
18 existing partnerships with Young
19 Scholars. One of the schools is actually
20 in the Strawberry Mansion community as a
21 renaissance school, Young Scholars
22 Douglass. Students there are already
23 participating in Outward Bound programs
24 with funding that is predominantly
25 provided by private sources.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 We have a great interest in
3 working with Strawberry Mansion High
4 School and we have already spoken with
5 officials at the School District to begin
6 to develop some program plans for
7 Strawberry Mansion High School over the
8 coming months.

9 In addition, we serve close to
10 4,200 students in public and charter
11 schools and also students who enroll from
12 private schools and parochial schools
13 across the City. So it is our hope to be
14 able to continue to fund these programs
15 in part with funding where it is
16 available from the School District which,
17 as you all are very, very close to
18 understanding, has been a challenge, but
19 then we also match or double match with
20 funds that we raise from the generosity
21 of the community. So we have at this
22 time, I would say, close to 25,000
23 individuals in the City who have been
24 able to participate in Outward Bound
25 programming, and the new facility will

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 allow us to be able to reach more and
3 make more of an impact and have more
4 individuals from neighborhoods, but also
5 from neighborhoods across the City
6 because of the access through public
7 transportation. So it's an ideal
8 location for us to be able to continue to
9 inspire young people to be more than they
10 thought they could.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I think
13 that you really have your heart in the
14 right place, but after hearing
15 Ms. Robinson's comments, I do have to say
16 I do have some concern in terms of the
17 community outreach plan. It doesn't seem
18 like there is really one in place that
19 would ensure that people who live
20 particularly in the immediate area are
21 included in what's going to happen, and I
22 think that nothing really will be worse
23 than to have the state-of-the-art
24 beautiful, fantastic facility and then
25 you have young people who because they're

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 not in the right network or they're not
3 connected with the right school or
4 after-school program that they are not
5 included in the information circle and,
6 therefore, they may live within one, two,
7 five, ten miles of where you're located
8 and be completely oblivious to what's
9 happening in their own neighborhood.

10 I grew up not too far from that
11 location, at 20th and Allegheny, and I
12 consider that as part of the
13 neighborhood, but I could easily see how
14 young people in that particular area
15 would not be made aware of what you all
16 are planning to do. So I really think it
17 may require going back to the drawing
18 board and coming up with something in
19 terms of a more defined outreach plan,
20 how are you going to reach these folks in
21 this neighborhood. I understand what
22 you're saying, that you're going to reach
23 out and you're going to be able to
24 connect with people throughout the City
25 of Philadelphia in different programs and

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 schools and so forth, including some of
3 the schools in the area, but we really
4 want to make sure that we get as many
5 folks in as possible.

6 MS. PASTUSZEK: Absolutely.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Councilman
8 Jones.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
10 And thank you for your comments earlier.
11 I know you have been a consistent voice
12 on inclusion in young people in North
13 Philadelphia and people in general. Not
14 you. I was talking about the former
15 testimony. But I want to say to you and
16 to all who are listening, we have in that
17 area, it is in my district. It
18 services -- it's closer to North
19 Philadelphia, but it services -- West
20 Philadelphia is a stone's throw away
21 across the river, and what I'd like you
22 to consider is the fact that the High
23 School of the Future is a half a mile
24 away, Strawberry Mansion half a mile
25 away, a little further, an elementary

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 school, Discovery Charter School, Global
3 Leadership Academy, a mile away. Those
4 are the neighborhood schools in that
5 area.

6 What we did with Centennial
7 Lake in the last couple of years, we took
8 a lake that was the first lake, man-made
9 lake in the nation, first man-made lake
10 in the nation, concrete bedding, to
11 celebrate the centennial anniversary of
12 the country. It had fallen into
13 disrepair, similar to the reservoir. And
14 for the record, I ran the last public
15 league race out at that reservoir before
16 they moved it to West Philly and Belmont
17 Plateau. Do not date me. I did. I ran
18 that.

19 And so I want you to know what
20 we did with that Centennial Lake was got
21 people of good hearts and big pockets to
22 fix that lake. We restored the walking
23 path around it. We have an amphitheater
24 in that lake, and it's open for all
25 people. I watch kids from Discovery walk

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 around there while their biology teacher
3 talks about the red-bellied turtle and
4 what it eats and digests and the kinds of
5 food it eats and how it's on the
6 hierarchy of life.

7 Every kid should experience
8 that from wherever. And as long as that
9 is the intention, to be open to all
10 people, whether you're from Bucks County
11 or from Berks Street, that is a good
12 program. And in so doing, kids who may
13 not have the exposure to urban kids and
14 urban kids who may not have -- but they
15 have in common birds. That's what I want
16 to happen, and that's what I hope will
17 happen.

18 My grandchildren go to Smith
19 Playground, you know. They're from West
20 Philly. They're not from North Philly,
21 but they travel out there. It's a cheap
22 date. Listen, you don't have to spend a
23 hundred dollars on your kid going to the
24 movies.

25 So the more of these venues

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 that we're able to reclaim, the better.
3 Again, we don't want it fenced up
4 anymore. I remember those days watching
5 people walking around there. We can get
6 back to that. And it is open for all
7 people. I say this -- we have this
8 conversation with the Commissioner all
9 the time, that multi-diversed cultures
10 coming together find common ground, and
11 that's what I hope for all children, West
12 Philly, North Philly, Berks County, Berks
13 Street. All right? But we need that
14 plan in a written form that -- best-laid
15 plans by mice and men come out better
16 written down. All right?

17 MR. WALLIS: It absolutely will
18 be written, and I would just both respect
19 and honor your passion and our collective
20 passion around this. The mission of both
21 Outward Bound and Audubon is literally to
22 connect people, kids to nature. If we
23 are not trying to touch the lives of
24 every single child in Philadelphia, we're
25 not doing what we want to be doing.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 Now, that having been said, it
3 takes, you know, a lot of money to run
4 those programs. We are bound and
5 determined to do that, but our goal is
6 just like yours. And, yes, we will write
7 it down, because as a business person, if
8 we don't have a plan, we don't know what
9 we're doing. So it will be written down.
10 It's not yet fully finished.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
12 Madam Chair. Thank you.

13 MS. PASTUSZEK: Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
15 very much.

16 The Chair recognizes
17 Councilwoman Brown.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I have to
19 join the chorus, because I come to a
20 world too if it's not in writing, it
21 doesn't exist. And so with that, I've
22 learned the hard way too that deadlines
23 and timelines matter. So with the
24 concern raised and your agreement that it
25 will be in writing, when can we

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 anticipate that, 24 months from now, 36
3 months from now, after the next board
4 meeting? Just give us a sense of when we
5 could see those thoughts reduced to
6 paper.

7 (Witness approached witness
8 table.)

9 MS. PASTUSZEK: We're going to
10 turn the mic to Janet Starwood, who has
11 been the Project Coordinator for this
12 project and worked very closely with a
13 number of the community groups on our
14 behalf as well.

15 Janet.

16 MS. STARWOOD: Good afternoon,
17 Councilwoman Bass, Councilman Curtis
18 Jones --

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You have to
20 sit at the mic. Thank you. State your
21 name for the record.

22 MS. STARWOOD: My name is Janet
23 Starwood. I'm Director of Urban
24 Conservation for Audubon Pennsylvania,
25 and I would like to tell you our personal

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 experience of this issue.

3 Getting this word out into the
4 community and making sure that,
5 Councilman Jones, your grandchildren
6 know, that Ms. Robinson's grandchildren
7 know, that everyone knows that this is a
8 resource for everyone in Philadelphia has
9 been a top priority all along for this
10 project, and there are marketing plans
11 that are in place and evidence that they
12 have occurred.

13 For example, over the last four
14 years, three years, Outward Bound and
15 Audubon have been at every Strawberry
16 Mansion Day with a booth describing what
17 we hope to bring by way of this
18 connection with nature, science,
19 technology to the young people of
20 Strawberry Mansion, to the young people
21 from the High School for the Future. We
22 actually have a targeted picture of the
23 center with concentric circles and plans
24 for reaching out to faith-based
25 communities as a very effective way of

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 having people be aware, and those plans
3 have been in place. We have mapped out
4 already the connections with businesses
5 in the communities within the two-mile,
6 four-mile, and six-mile radius and how to
7 get word out to those businesses.
8 Audubon has had programs in schools in
9 Strawberry Mansion, and beyond, Outward
10 Bound has been doing that already.

11 So sometimes it's not the
12 executive directors that are in the
13 nitty-gritty of this, but the project
14 directors who have the map and the
15 roadmap, and these are, you know, written
16 as the public access plan that you're
17 seeing here today. There is a very
18 specific and intentional way of
19 approaching and reaching out through
20 concentric circles so that everyone in
21 Philadelphia knows the center is for
22 them, but particularly our neighbors in
23 the 4th District, in the 5th District,
24 and the communities that are so close to
25 us and that will be vital to our success,

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 and that includes plans for getting
3 volunteers, plans for getting seniors
4 involved, and plans to bring the
5 community into the center.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very good.

7 MS. STARWOOD: Thank you.

8 MS. PASTUSZEK: Additionally, I
9 respect the request for a date, and as
10 you may be aware in the sublease, there
11 is this option period of the first five
12 years, and we do have milestones in that
13 option period where we need to report to
14 the Department of Parks and Recreation on
15 our fundraising accomplishment. I
16 believe that it is extremely reasonable
17 if we are able to have 18 months to two
18 years to develop a serious,
19 well-thought-out, and actively inclusive
20 plan for programming at the center, and
21 that that would be a timetable that is
22 extremely reasonable.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
24 helpful. That's very helpful in terms of
25 allaying our concerns. They're not

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 fears, but concerns, because when you
3 stay here long enough, you hear a lot of
4 talk, and then 24, 36 months later, we
5 get calls saying that whatever was
6 discussed in the hearing hasn't been
7 honored. I know that because I went
8 through that with the stadiums, where we
9 had to bring subcontractors back to this
10 area, to these quarters, and fend for
11 them because the prime contractor did not
12 honor their word. And so it comes from
13 an experience and from the duty we have
14 in many ways to ensure that what we say
15 on the record indeed becomes a reality.

16 I have one final question on
17 that, Madam Chair.

18 So I want to understand the
19 lease, subtenant, landlord
20 responsibility. On Page 67 of 79, it has
21 that the landlord is the Philadelphia
22 Authority for Industrial Development
23 Corporation.

24 MS. PASTUSZEK: PAID.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Who will

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 ultimately be responsible for ensuring
3 the meeting of the goals in the EOP plan?
4 Is it the non-profit? Is it the
5 landlord? I know it's not Fairmount
6 Park. So who is responsible?

7 MS. PASTUSZEK: It's us. The
8 East Park Leadership and Conservation
9 Center is responsible for full compliance
10 with the plan.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very well.
12 Okay, then. Thank you again.

13 Thank you, Madam Chair.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
15 Thank you very much.

16 Are there any other questions
17 from the panel?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Anyone else
20 here to testify on behalf of this bill?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: This now
23 concludes the public hearing of the
24 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
25 Cultural Affairs. We will now go into

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 our public meeting shortly.

3 Thank you very much for your
4 testimony.

5 The Chair now recognizes
6 Councilmember Jones for a motion on Bill
7 No. 130412.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
9 Madam Chair. I offer an amendment to
10 Bill No. 130459, which has been
11 properly -- 412. Thank you, Madam Chair.
12 I offer an amendment to Bill No. 130412,
13 which has been circulated to members of
14 the Committee.

15 (Duly seconded.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All those
17 in favor say aye.

18 (Aye.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Those
20 opposed?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The motion
23 carries, and Bill No. 130412 is amended.

24 And the Chair now recognizes
25 Councilman Jones for a motion on Bill No.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 130412.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
4 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No.
5 130412, as amended, be reported from this
6 Committee with a favorable recommendation
7 and further move that the rules of
8 Council be suspended to permit first
9 reading of this bill at our next session
10 of Council.

11 (Duly seconded.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It has been
13 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
14 130412, as amended, be reported from this
15 Committee with a favorable recommendation
16 and further moved that the rules of
17 Council be suspended as to permit first
18 reading at the next scheduled session of
19 City Council.

20 All those in favor say aye.

21 (Aye.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Those
23 opposed?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The motion

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.
2 carries, and Bill No. 130412 will be
3 reported from this Committee with a
4 favorable recommendation with a request
5 that the rules of Council be suspended to
6 permit first reading at the next session
7 of Council.

8 And the Chair now recognizes
9 Councilmember Jones for a motion on Bill
10 No. 130459.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
12 Madam Chair. I offer an amendment to
13 Bill No. 130459, which has been properly
14 circulated. The amendment includes an
15 updated version of the lease agreement
16 and the EOP plan. I move that Bill No.
17 130459 be amended as proposed.

18 (Duly seconded.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It has been
20 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
21 130459 be amended as proposed.

22 All those in favor say aye.

23 (Aye.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Those
25 opposed?

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The motion
4 carries, and Bill No. 130459 is amended.

5 The Chair now recognizes
6 Councilmember Jones for a motion on Bill
7 No. 130459, as amended.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
9 again, Madam Chair. I move that Bill No.
10 130459, as amended, be reported from this
11 Committee with a favorable recommendation
12 and further move that the rules of
13 Council be suspended to permit first
14 reading of this bill at our next session
15 of Council.

16 (Duly seconded.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It has been
18 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
19 130459 be reported from this Committee
20 with a favorable recommendation and
21 further moved that the rules of Council
22 be suspended as to permit first reading
23 at the next scheduled session of City
24 Council.

25 All those in favor say aye.

1 6/18/13 - PARKS - BILL 130412, etc.

2 (Aye.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Those

4 opposed?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The motion

7 carries. Bill No. 130459, as amended,

8 will be reported from this Committee with

9 a favorable recommendation with a request

10 that the rules of Council be suspended to

11 permit first reading at the next session

12 of Council.

13 With that, the business of this

14 Committee is concluded. Thank you very

15 much for attending.

16 (Committee on Parks, Recreation

17 and Cultural Affairs concluded at 4:25

18 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, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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