

1

2

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PROPERTY AND

4

PUBLIC WORKS

5

- - -

6

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, April 16, 2009
2:40 p.m.

8

- - -

9

10

PRESENT:

11

COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE, CHAIR

12

COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE

13

COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

14

COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

15

BILL 090268 - An ordinance authorizing the
Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of
the City, to enter into an agreement to lease
the Lincoln Financial Mural Arts Center at the
Thomas Eakins House located at 1729 Mt. Vernon
Street to the Philadelphia Authority for
Industrial Development...

18

19

20

21

- - -

22

23

V A R A L L O Incorporated
Litigation Support Services
Eleven Penn Center

24

1835 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215.561.2220 215.567.2670

25

1

2

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Good

3

afternoon. This is the Committee on

4

Public Property and Public Works. We

5

have established a quorum: Councilman

6

Rizzo, Councilman Greenlee and

7

Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller.

8

Mr. Carter, please read the

9

title of the bill.

10

THE CLERK: Bill No. 090267, an

11

ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of

12

Public Property, on behalf of the City,

13

to enter into an agreement to lease the

14

Lincoln Financial Mural Arts Center at

15

the Thomas Eakins House located at 1729

16

Mt. Vernon Street to the Philadelphia

17

Authority for Industrial Development for

18

further sublease by PAID to the Mural

19

Arts Advocates, for use by the City of

20

Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, all

21

under certain terms and conditions.

22

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

23

(Witnesses approached witness

24

table.)

25

COUNCILMAN CLARKE:

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 Mr. Herzins, please proceed.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:

4 Good afternoon, Chairman Clarke and
5 members of the Committee on Public
6 Property and Public Works. My name is
7 John Herzins and I am the Deputy
8 Commissioner of the Department of Public
9 Property here on behalf of the
10 Commissioner today to testify in support
11 of Bill No. 090268, an ordinance
12 authorizing the Commissioner, on behalf
13 of the City, to enter into an agreement
14 to lease the Lincoln Financial Mural Arts
15 Center at the Thomas Eakins House located
16 at 1729 Mt. Vernon Street to PAID for
17 further sublease by PAID to the Mural
18 Arts Advocates, for use by the City of
19 Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, all
20 under certain terms and conditions.

21 This ordinance will provide for
22 a ten-year lease with two renewal
23 options. This long-term tenancy will
24 enable the Mural Arts Advocates to
25 leverage state and other funding for

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 their operations. The Mural Arts

3 Advocates will continue to be the

4 caretakers for the property, while the

5 City will assume the utility cost.

6 The Department supports this

7 measure and, accordingly, I respectfully

8 ask that Council approve Bill No. 090268

9 and also request a suspension of the

10 rules to allow first reading at the next

11 session of Council.

12 Thank you, and I'll be happy to

13 answer any questions. And with me today

14 is Thora Jacobson, the Chief Operating

15 Officer, who is here to provide testimony

16 also.

17 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

18 Good afternoon. Please

19 proceed.

20 MS. JACOBSON: Good afternoon,

21 Chairman Clarke and members of Council.

22 I serve as the Chief Operating Officer

23 for the Philadelphia Mural Arts Advocates

24 and the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts

25 Program. I apologize that our Director,

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 Jane Golden, could not be here today,
3 because it is through her personal
4 extraordinary efforts that the Mural Arts
5 Program has transformed the home and
6 studio of Thomas Eakins into an
7 extraordinarily creative and educational
8 hub.

9 I want to thank you, Councilman
10 Clarke, for introducing this ordinance,
11 because it is a piece of legislation that
12 assures the home for Mural Arts for years
13 to come, recognizes our considerable
14 investment in the property and makes it
15 more easily understandable by auditors,
16 funders and others.

17 Mural Arts moved into the
18 Thomas Eakins House in 2001 after it had
19 been turned back to the City by the
20 Philadelphia Museum of Art that had
21 occupied the building for a
22 community-based arts program when it was
23 deeded over to the City in the mid '70s.
24 The building had been given to the City
25 with the expressed condition that it be

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 used for art education or as a museum in
3 memory of our City's best known painter.

4 With Mural Arts' move to the
5 Eakins House, the City once again had a
6 tenant that had fulfilled the
7 requirements of the will and offered real
8 promise of service to the community.

9 Mural Arts immediately began to use the
10 space for after-school classes, and the
11 growth of the program made it clear by
12 2004 that both buildings, both 1727, the
13 home of the caretaker, and 1729 Mt.

14 Vernon, needed to be renovated. By
15 2006/2007, Mural Arts had raised more
16 than \$1.4 million to outfit the building
17 for a growing staff of teaching artists
18 and muralists and created a home for both
19 its Mural Corps and Big Picture classes,
20 both to teach sequential art skills to
21 middle school, high school students and
22 dropouts, paint mural sections on
23 parachute cloth, and teach the new
24 technologies that support mural making in
25 the 21st century. Today, MAP holds

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 classes for youth, adjudicated youth,
3 reentry workers and neophyte muralists,
4 averaging between 100 and 150 students,
5 four to five days a week year-round. It
6 also houses a growing staff of project
7 managers, a mural operations crew, a
8 staff of teaching artists and program
9 developers, tour guides to our growing
10 collection and an administrative staff.
11 Mural Arts currently houses 50 full-time
12 staff members and welcomes hundreds more
13 to lectures, exhibition openings,
14 workshops and trainings over the course
15 of the year.

16 This unique combination of
17 office and studio space afforded by the
18 landmark building brings both color and
19 structure to our operations and is
20 critical to the ability of the Mural Arts
21 to fulfill its organizational mission and
22 its levels of service to both the City
23 itself, completing 116 mural projects in
24 Fiscal 2008 and 2,000-plus youth served
25 through its art education programs

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 annually.

3 Its value to us is so
4 substantial that we have already invested
5 \$1.478 million and continue to raise
6 funds to maintain its structural
7 integrity, security and operational
8 efficiency. It is worth noting that as a
9 non-profit, we also -- when we ask
10 private funders to invest in a building
11 that doesn't belong to us, they have some
12 concerns. They want to know that in
13 making capital gifts to us, they can be
14 assured that Mural Arts has a home over
15 the long haul.

16 It is for that reason, as we
17 are about to launch a second capital
18 project to replace window frames,
19 flashings, upgrade HVAC and security
20 equipment, that we come to Council to
21 permit Public Property to negotiate a
22 lease with the Mural Arts Advocates that
23 will provide us a home base for at least
24 the next 10 to 20 years. It will bring
25 additional resources to maintain and

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 upgrade an important City asset.

3 And in closing, I would simply
4 say that we continue to be grateful to
5 Public Property for their ongoing efforts
6 to support our operations, and we want to
7 continue to be both effective and
8 respectful tenants.

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

10 Councilman Greenlee.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Yes.

12 Very quick, Mr. Chairman.

13 Ms. Jacobson, not only is this
14 building in the 5th Councilmanic
15 District, but also in the 15th Ward of
16 the 5th Councilmanic District, which I
17 hold near and dear to me.

18 I've been to a number of events
19 at the site, and you've been a tremendous
20 addition to that block, and not just for
21 what you do for the City, but also for
22 that area. So I'm very happy to support
23 what you're doing there.

24 MS. JACOBSON: Thank you,
25 Councilman. I'm glad to know that.

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
3 Councilman.

4 Any other questions by members
5 of the Committee of these witnesses?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There being
8 none, thank you very much for your
9 testimony.

10 Anyone else to testify on this
11 bill?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There being
14 none, this concludes the public hearing
15 on the Committee of Public Property and
16 Public Works. We will now go into a
17 public meeting.

18 Councilman Greenlee, please
19 give me a motion on Bill No. 090268.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
21 you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.
22 090268 be reported out of this Committee
23 with a favorable recommendation and move
24 further that the rules of Council be
25 suspended to allow for first reading at

1 4/16/09 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 090268

2 our next session of Council.

3 (Duly seconded.)

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: It's been
5 moved and seconded.

6 All in favor?

7 (Aye.)

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Those
9 opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The ayes
12 have it. Bill No. 090268 is reported out
13 of Committee with a favorable
14 recommendation, with a rules suspension
15 as to allow reading at the next session
16 of Council.

17 Thank you very much. This
18 concludes the public meeting on the
19 Committee of Public Property and Public
20 Works.

21 Thank you.

22 (Committee on Public Property
23 and Public Works concluded at 2:45 p.m.)

24 - - -

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

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 16, 2009, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this
transcript does not apply to any reproduction
of the same by any means, unless under the
direct control and/or supervision of the
certifying reporter.)

