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

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Room 696, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, June 5, 2003
9:20 a.m.

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Bill 030300 - Ordinance amending an Ordinance (Bill
No. 877) approved September 16, 1994,
by amending an exhibit thereto, in
order to increase the limit of the
amount of funding any entity may
receive in any fiscal year

PRESENT: COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS-BROWN,
(Chair)
COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

- - -

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We are here to hear
3 testimony on Bill No. 030300. The title of the bill
4 read as follows: Amending an ordinance (Bill No.
5 877), approved September 16, 1994 by amending an
6 exhibit thereto in order to increase the limit of
7 the amount of funding any entity may receive in any
8 fiscal year.

9 The members of the committee that are in
10 attendance are Councilman Rizzo, Councilwoman Jannie
11 Blackwell, Council President Anna Verna and myself,
12 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, chair of the
13 committee, and Councilman Darrell Clarke.

14 Councilman O'Neill staff person, do you
15 have any remarks? Please provide the remarks at
16 this time. Please identify yourself for the record.

17 MR. FINESTONE: Aaron Finestone, City
18 Council technical staff. This bill raises the
19 limit, the ceiling, on what the maximum grant can
20 be. It is not an appropriation as such. Back in
21 about 1994 when the fund was set up, it was an
22 ordinance and an agreement incorporated into the
23 ordinance, and at that time the limit was set at
24 \$5,000 per grant and in view of inflation and good
25 causes which are needed by various community groups,

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2 we feel that the limit should be raised to \$6500.
3 This does not require any grant to be that high.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Any comments or
5 questions from members of this committee?

6 We thank you very much.

7 MR. FINESTONE: Councilwoman, we need
8 suspension of the rules.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We do have one
10 other person to testify. Thank you very much.

11 Mr. Kelly, do you want to move to the
12 table and provide your testimony?

13 MR. KELLY: Good morning, Madam
14 Chairman. My name is Ed Kelly, President of the
15 Pennypack Festival. You will have to excuse my
16 voice, Madam Chairman.

17 Northeast Philadelphia, large enough in
18 population of about 500,000 people to be
19 Pennsylvania's second largest City. It has long
20 been the stepchild of the city politics,
21 getting less of its fair share of just about
22 everything from at-large City Councilmen to culture.

23 When it comes to doling out funds to the
24 cultural center, a fraction, about 1 percent, goes
25 to the Northeast, which I'm very unhappy about. The

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2 lack of cultural appropriation presentation
3 facilities puts northeast residents at a
4 disadvantage to the rest of the City, which I think
5 we can prove that. The City's cultural program
6 supports the Mann Music Center, approximately
7 \$390,000. The Robin Hood Dell East gets about
8 \$388,000 with substantial grants. Now, the grants
9 are very important because it is insurance. I will
10 bring that up later. However, a very small
11 percentage of the cultural funds go to the Northeast
12 Y. It isn't that the Dell East and the Mann Music
13 Center aren't important to the City and aren't
14 deserving. We feel those of us in the Northeast who
15 pay our fair share of the taxes are not receiving
16 our fair share of the cultural programs and the
17 cultural funds. Substantial funds have been
18 contributed from the City coffers to the Kimmel
19 Performing Arts Centers and the Mann Music Center.
20 However, prices remain rather high and are out of
21 reach for the majority of the people of all parts of
22 the City. I would like that to be checked into
23 later on too including those in the Northeast.
24 These facilities are beautiful and are quite a
25 distance from the Northeast, an average of 30 to 35

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2 miles round trip. Residents in the Northeast want
3 their own cultural facilities in their own
4 community.

5 Although there are many other things to
6 speak about and concerning cultural facilities in
7 the Northeast or lack thereof, I would like to
8 address my attention today to the Pennypack Park
9 Festival. We started that back in 1970 by two
10 public-spirited citizens, meaning Lou Farinella and
11 myself. Lou Farinella is now working very closely
12 -- he is the No. 2. man -- with Bob Brady and the
13 City committee. We raised funds from area
14 businesses, and, if more was needed, contributed
15 from our own pocket.

16 The concerts were and still are free to
17 the public. At that time the City provides services
18 at no charge. However, even at that time the
19 Northeast received very little money from City
20 government for cultural programs. The Pennypack
21 Festival fell on hard times in the early 1990's and
22 ceased operations.

23 Recently in year 2000 a group of
24 public-spirited citizens including myself
25 reactivated the group and have had two seasons

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2 for --

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Mr. Kelly, we know
4 of your love and passion for the Pennypack Park
5 Festival. Can you summarize for us those several
6 pages and underscore --

7 MR. KELLY: That's what I'm doing now.

8 In comparison, little Bensalem Township
9 in nearby Bucks County, a small fraction of the
10 population of Northeast Philadelphia, has a
11 beautiful theater up there. I would like to take
12 you and some of the members of Council to see it. I
13 was up there yesterday with Mayor D'Geralimo, and
14 I'm meeting with him next week.

15 What I'm interested in right now is we
16 need actual funding for insurance and things like
17 that, which we didn't have before, so I'm asking for
18 \$75,000 on what can be done on it.

19 The other thing, I would like to close
20 by saying I want to publicly thank Commerce Bank,
21 who is our main sponsor along with PECO, the
22 Philadelphia Foundation and Andy Sweeney and a great
23 big thanks to George Caulker, the president of
24 Channel Entertainment. I love billboards so it is a
25 case where I would like to have billboards.

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2 Do you have the billboards? Hold them
3 up for the chairperson.

4 But I would like to say thank you to
5 George Caulker and Channel Entertainment for all the
6 things they have done for us.

7 I invited Chief Inspector Evelyn Heath,
8 who is now the head of the police academy, to bring
9 her recruits up there to meet the people up there
10 and know that the people are interested in working
11 with community people on the programs.

12 That's about all I want to do, Miss
13 Chairman.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank you very
15 much, Mr. Kelly, for your testimony. As I said, in
16 the three years I have been here you have educated
17 me more than anyone else about the wonderful
18 activity of Pennypack Park. We want to thank you
19 for your testimony.

20 I will ask my colleagues if they have
21 any questions for this witness, any remarks?

22 Is there anyone else left to testify on
23 this bill?

24 That concludes testimony on Bill 030300.
25 We will now move into a public meeting and I will

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2 ask my colleague, Councilman Darrell Clarke, to make
3 a motion on Bill 030300.

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam
5 Chair. I make a motion that Bill No. 030300 be
6 reported out of committee with favorable
7 recommendation and request for suspension of rules
8 as to allow reading at the next session.

9 (Duly seconded.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Bill 030300 has
11 been moved and properly seconded. All in favor of
12 this bill say aye.

13 MEMBERS: Aye.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That concludes this
15 public meeting.

16 (The hearing adjourned at 9:30 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

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Cynthia A. Whyte, RPR

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Committee on Parks, Recreation
and Cultural Affairs of the Council of the City
of Philadelphia of June 5, 2003, were reported
fully and accurately by me, and that this is a
correct transcript of same.

(The foregoing certification of this
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