

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

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, October 31, 2019
1:14 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, CHAIR
COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

BILL 190637 - An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of the City, to acquire fee simple title or a lesser interest, by purchase, dedication, donation, condemnation, agreement in lieu of condemnation or otherwise, in Sayre Morris Recreation Center...

BILL 190765 - An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to enter into a Stormwater Easement Agreement with the School District of Philadelphia...

- - -

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 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 hearing is to hear
8 testimony on Bills No. 190637 and 190765.

9 Members of the Committee in
10 attendance are Councilwoman Blondell
11 Reynolds Brown, Councilman Allan Domb,
12 Council President Darrell Clarke, and
13 Councilman Kenyatta Johnson.

14 The Clerk will now read the
15 title of Bill No. 190765.

16 THE CLERK: Authorizing the
17 Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks and
18 Recreation, on behalf of the City of
19 Philadelphia, to enter into a Stormwater
20 Easement Agreement with The School
21 District of Philadelphia, to allow for
22 the management of stormwater discharge
23 from the northern portion of The School
24 District parcels located at 3201 Ryan
25 Avenue and 3001 Ryan Avenue,

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 Philadelphia, PA, by way of overland flow
3 to the adjacent Pennypack Park, all under
4 certain terms and conditions.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
6 And if we could have the Clerk now call
7 the names of the witnesses to testify.

8 THE CLERK: Terrence McKenna,
9 Aparna Palantino.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
13 state your name for the record and begin
14 your testimony.

15 MR. McKENNA: Terrence McKenna
16 with Gilbane, Senior Project Executive
17 for the project.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You can
19 begin your testimony.

20 MR. McKENNA: Madam Chair, we
21 submitted written testimony for the
22 record. I'd be happy to read it or I can
23 answer any questions you have relative to
24 that testimony.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, you

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 could actually read it, because this is
3 going to be a very brief hearing anyway.
4 We don't have a lot of folks to testify.
5 But if you could read it just so that
6 folks would be familiar with the bill and
7 with the work that Gilbane will be doing
8 in this project.

9 MR. McKENNA: Sure.

10 Absolutely.

11 Good morning, Madam Chair and
12 members of the Committee. My name is
13 Terrence McKenna and I'm a Senior Project
14 Executive with Gilbane Development
15 Company. Thank you, Madam Chair, for
16 allowing us to testify today. We also
17 thank Councilman Henon for his
18 sponsorship of Bill No. 190765 and his
19 continuous support with this endeavor.

20 Bill No. 190765 before you this
21 morning seeks authorization for the
22 Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, on
23 behalf of the City, to enter into a
24 Stormwater Easement Agreement with the
25 School District of Philadelphia to allow

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 for the management of stormwater

3 discharge from the northern portion of

4 the School District parcels located at

5 3001 Ryan Avenue and 3201 Ryan Avenue.

6 The agreement will allow the management

7 and maintenance of the current stormwater

8 discharge pattern and flow during and

9 after construction of a new K through 8

10 elementary school situated at the

11 northern portion of the premises.

12 The need for the proposed

13 discharge of stormwater via overland flow

14 to the adjacent Pennypack Creek is

15 required by the Philadelphia Water

16 Department due to the existing site's

17 current stormwater runoff patterns. In

18 the existing condition, the northern

19 portion of the project limits drains via

20 overland flow to Pennypack Creek, while

21 the southern portion drains towards

22 existing stormwater conveyance structures

23 and then into public storm sewers. The

24 Philadelphia Water Department has

25 requested, to the extent possible, this

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 drainage pattern is maintained in the
3 proposed condition. To that end, a
4 surface infiltration basin and
5 installation of infrastructure known as a
6 level spreader has been proposed at the
7 northern extent of the project limits to
8 mimic the current natural flow of
9 stormwater discharge and manage
10 approximately 121,600 square feet of
11 drainage area that discharges stormwater
12 via overland towards Pennypack Creek.

13 In addition, the project
14 involves the construction of a new K
15 through 8 school for approximately 1,600
16 students, will be union construction with
17 a focus on employing local residents
18 affiliated with the unions, and Gilbane
19 has committed to a 40 percent
20 participation of minority and woman-owned
21 firms during the construction of the new
22 school.

23 In conclusion, Gilbane
24 Development Company respectfully requests
25 the Committee recommend passage of the

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 bill to allow this important project to
3 move forward.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
6 for your testimony.

7 You can state your name and
8 begin.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:
10 Aparna Palantino, Deputy Commissioner,
11 Parks and Recreation.

12 Good afternoon, Chairwoman Bass
13 and members of the Committee on Parks and
14 Recreation. I'm here today to testify in
15 support of Bill No. 190765, an ordinance
16 authorizing the Commissioner of Parks and
17 Recreation, on behalf of the City of
18 Philadelphia, to enter into a Stormwater
19 Easement Agreement with the School
20 District of Philadelphia to allow for the
21 management of stormwater discharge from
22 the northern portion of the School
23 District parcels located at 3201 Ryan
24 Avenue and 3001 Ryan Avenue by way of
25 overland flow to the adjacent Pennypack

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 Park, all under certain terms and
3 conditions.

4 This bill, sponsored by
5 Councilman Henon, was introduced in
6 conjunction with the Philadelphia School
7 District's plan to build a new school on
8 the site of the current Austin Meehan
9 Middle School. This easement will allow
10 surface stormwater drainage over park
11 property, Pennypack Park specifically,
12 and into the Pennypack Creek. The amount
13 of drainage permitted by this proposed
14 easement will be in accordance with the
15 Water Department regulations for on-site
16 stormwater management. The easement will
17 enable the stormwater management system
18 constructed for the new school in
19 accordance with the PWD requirements for
20 new construction to slowly drain overflow
21 stormwater through the park. It is
22 anticipated that the stormwater discharge
23 from the school property will most likely
24 be infiltrated into park property, thus
25 never reaching Pennypack Creek.

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 The Department of Parks and
3 Recreation supports this measure and,
4 accordingly, I respectfully request that
5 City Council approve Bill No. 190765.

6 I'm also requesting a
7 suspension of the rules as to allow for
8 first reading at the next session of
9 Council.

10 Thank you. I'll be happy to
11 answer any questions you might have.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
13 very much.

14 Are there any questions from
15 the panel?

16 Councilman Domb.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have a
18 question because I'm not -- I'm standing
19 in for the Committee today, so I just
20 have a general question, and, that is,
21 what is the cost of this project; do we
22 know?

23 MR. MCKENNA: The cost of the
24 project is approximately \$78,900,000.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: 78 million?

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 MR. McKENNA: 900,000.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And over what
4 time period will this construction occur?

5 MR. McKENNA: We're looking to
6 break ground this December, mid December,
7 and the school is to be delivered so that
8 the School District can open in September
9 of 2021. So it's approximately an
10 18-month construction.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: How many
12 square feet will the school be?

13 MR. McKENNA: Approximately
14 180,000.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And do you
16 have any idea how many children we can
17 accommodate in the school?

18 MR. McKENNA: The school is
19 designed for 1,660 students. It can
20 ultimately accommodate approximately
21 1,900 students, but the School District
22 designs for approximately 85 percent
23 below maximum capacity.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And I don't
25 even know. Is this school K through 6?

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 MR. McKENNA: K through 8.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And just
4 stormwater is just part of that whole
5 process basically?

6 MR. McKENNA: That is correct.
7 It's part of the site development.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
9 you very much.

10 MR. McKENNA: You're welcome.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you for
12 your testimony today.

13 Thank you, Madam Chair.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

15 I just had a brief question.

16 First, I wanted to acknowledge the
17 presence of Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell
18 who is here and joined us.

19 But I had a question regarding
20 your last statement in terms of minority
21 participation, M/W/DBE participation and
22 40 percent. And can you speak to
23 Gilbane's commitment to that number?
24 Because as you know, there has been a
25 considerable amount of concern around

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 minority participation, particularly
3 African American and Latino participation
4 in these work sites in Philadelphia. So
5 can you speak to that and to ensuring us
6 that this 40 percent number is going to
7 be real?

8 MR. MCKENNA: Yes. Absolutely.
9 As part of the bid for the school, there
10 was a requirement by the School District
11 to have 35 percent. We went above that,
12 because we felt it was achievable to go
13 above that, to 40 percent based upon our
14 most recent projects. As Councilman
15 Johnson will attest down at the Stadium
16 Casino in Philadelphia, we're well above
17 60 percent participation at this point,
18 and for our recent project for the Port
19 of Philadelphia, we finished about 42
20 percent.

21 So we have the subcontractors
22 in line. We're currently working with
23 them, and we feel 40 percent or above is
24 achievable.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good.

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 Well, thank you very much. Thank you for
3 your testimony.

4 Councilman Domb.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have one
6 other question. I just did the math, 78
7 million construction, 180,000 square
8 feet. It comes out to like 433 a foot.
9 Is that typically the cost -- I'm just
10 trying to educate myself -- on building
11 new schools across the country or is that
12 specific for Philadelphia?

13 MR. MCKENNA: Actually, it's a
14 tough question to answer relative to the
15 country as a whole, because as you're
16 aware, there is union construction in
17 Philadelphia and other jurisdictions
18 there's non-union. In jurisdictions
19 where there's union construction or
20 federally funded construction or
21 prevailing wage would come into play, it
22 is very competitive.

23 In some instances -- we're the
24 largest K through 8 builder in the United
25 States. In some jurisdictions, we're

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 seeing construction costs north of \$500,
3 close to \$600 a square foot.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: One other
5 question on that. The school you're
6 building, is this going to be like a
7 state-of-the-art with technology and so
8 forth?

9 MR. MCKENNA: Yes. Absolutely.
10 Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do you have
12 any idea what's going to be in that
13 school?

14 MR. MCKENNA: From a technology
15 standpoint? I'm a civil engineer by
16 degree, so I'm not the best one to opine
17 on technology, but it is being designed
18 as a state-of-the-art school, with
19 specific standards dictated by the School
20 District of Philadelphia.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
22 you very much for your testimony.

23 Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
25 both for your testimony.

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 Any additional questions?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

5 Councilwoman, did you have a question?

6 Councilwoman Blackwell.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much, Madam Chair and members of
9 this Recreation Committee. We are asking
10 for your consideration in having the
11 Sayre Morris Recreational Center -- it's
12 really a pool -- at 5800 Walnut Street
13 made part of the City's inventory. I
14 know there has to be some repairs --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

16 Councilwoman, can we pause on that for
17 one moment, because I think we're going
18 to come to that one next. We went out
19 order, so it's not you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm
21 sorry. Whenever you're ready, let me
22 know.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No, no, no.
24 We stepped out of order, so we'll be
25 right back at you.

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 Is there anyone else to testify
3 on Bill No. 190765?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
6 Well, thank you so much for coming and
7 for your testimony.

8 And if we could have the Clerk
9 read the title of 190637.

10 THE CLERK: Authorizing the
11 Commissioner of Public Property, on
12 behalf of the City, to acquire fee simple
13 title or a lesser interest, by purchase,
14 dedication, donation, condemnation,
15 agreement in lieu of condemnation or
16 otherwise, in Sayre Morris Recreation
17 Center located at 5800 Walnut Street for
18 public recreational or other purposes,
19 under certain terms and conditions.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And can you
21 call the first witness to testify as
22 well.

23 THE CLERK: Aparna Palantino.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

25 Aparna, before you begin your testimony,

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 I'd like to recognize Councilwoman
3 Blackwell.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you, Madam Chair. Sorry I went out of
6 order.

7 We've been dealing with Sayre
8 Morris since I was a child. The only
9 time -- it used to be one of the major
10 places in our city. This was where
11 people took their tests, their swimming
12 tests, to work anywhere in the City. It
13 was very, very well known, very popular,
14 and very respected.

15 In years now the City -- I mean
16 the School District has not maintained
17 it. The only time it's been open is when
18 I beg people to do me favors and go in
19 and try to deal with the conditions, and
20 what they talk about, lead paint, the
21 pool, all of those sorts of things, and
22 the only hope that I believe for Sayre
23 Morris is if we could get it in the
24 City's inventory.

25 Now, I know that Recreation

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 says pay for everything and then we'll
3 ask the City to take it. I know how they
4 feel about it, but we also know that it
5 doesn't have to be that way. I know the
6 President has had a pool donated
7 certainly in this way from the School
8 District to the City, and we're asking if
9 we can ask for the same thing, have this
10 pool donated to Recreation and then we'll
11 deal with all else that has to happen in
12 terms of the repairs and what else needs
13 to be done.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
15 very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
19 Council Lady.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you.

22 Aparna, you can state your name
23 for the record and begin your testimony.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:
25 Aparna Palantino, Deputy Commissioner,

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 Parks and Recreation.

3 Good afternoon, Chairwoman Bass
4 and members of the Committee on Parks and
5 Recreation. I'm here today to offer
6 testimony on Bill No. 190637, an
7 ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of
8 Public Property, on behalf of the City,
9 to acquire fee simple title or a lesser
10 interest, by purchase, dedication,
11 donation, condemnation, agreement in lieu
12 of condemnation or otherwise, in Sayre
13 Morris Recreation Center located at 5800
14 Walnut Street for public recreational or
15 other purposes, under certain terms and
16 conditions.

17 The Department of Parks and
18 Recreation has not had the opportunity to
19 review site and environmental assessments
20 for the Sayre Morris parcel, as this
21 information is still being compiled by
22 the School District of Philadelphia.
23 Once the assessments have been completed
24 and the School District has undertaken
25 measures to fully implement capital

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 improvements to the building, gymnasium,
3 and swimming pool ensuring that the
4 facilities are fully operational and code
5 compliant, Parks and Recreation will
6 consider bringing this property into our
7 inventory.

8 Thank you, and I'll be happy to
9 answer any questions you might have.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
11 Chair?

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
13 Councilwoman.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I've
15 talked with Dr. Hite several times. He
16 said he's happy to make the donation.
17 And so that's not the issue. And if we
18 could take it, we could work out any
19 other issues after we have ownership of
20 it.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, thank
22 you very much, Councilwoman, and we
23 recognize that we have a lack of swimming
24 facilities in our neighborhoods, and so
25 the idea of bringing this property over

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 into the Parks and Rec inventory so that
3 we can have it as a place where our young
4 people can learn how to swim. African
5 American children drown at a rate of like
6 60, 70 percent because they don't know
7 how to swim. So we want to make sure
8 that we have these amenities available
9 within our community. So thank you so
10 much for bringing this to our attention
11 for the Committee.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
15 additional questions from the Committee?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is there
18 anyone else here to testify on Bill No.
19 190637?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
22 there being none, we will now go into our
23 public meeting.

24 The Chair recognizes Councilman
25 Kenyatta Johnson for a motion on Bill No.

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 190637.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
4 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 190637
5 be reported from this Committee with a
6 favorable recommendation and further move
7 that the rules of Council be suspended to
8 permit first reading of this bill at the
9 next session of Council.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's been
11 moved and properly seconded -- one
12 moment.

13 Thank you. We've been joined
14 by Councilman Henon, and the Chair
15 recognizes Councilman Johnson for a
16 motion on Bill No. 190637.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
18 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 190637
19 be reported from this Committee with a
20 favorable recommendation and further move
21 that the rules of Council be suspended to
22 permit first reading of this bill at the
23 next session of Council.

24 (Duly seconded.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's been

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
3 190637 be reported from this Committee
4 with a favorable recommendation and
5 further moved that the rules of Council
6 be suspended to permit first reading at
7 the next session of Council.

8 All those in favor can now
9 signify by saying aye.

10 (Aye.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
12 opposed?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The motion
15 passes, and Bill No. 190637 will be
16 reported from this Committee with a
17 favorable recommendation with a request
18 that the rules of Council be suspended to
19 permit first reading at the next session
20 of Council.

21 The Chair now recognizes
22 Councilman Johnson for a motion on Bill
23 No. 190765.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
25 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 190765

1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.
2 be reported from this Committee with a
3 favorable recommendation and further move
4 that the rules of Council be suspended to
5 permit first reading of this bill at the
6 next session of Council.

7 (Duly seconded.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's been
9 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
10 190765 be reported from this Committee
11 with a favorable recommendation and
12 further moved that the rules of Council
13 be suspended to permit first reading of
14 this bill at the next session of Council.

15 All in favor of this motion
16 will signify by saying aye.

17 (Aye.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
19 opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The ayes
22 have it and the motion carries, and Bill
23 No. 190765 will be reported from this
24 Committee with a favorable recommendation
25 with a request that the rules of Council

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1 10/31/19 - PARKS - BILL 190637, ETC.

2 be suspended to permit first reading at
3 the next session of Council.

4 And this concludes the business
5 of this Committee.

6 Thank you.

7 (Committee on Parks, Recreation
8 and Cultural Affairs concluded at 1:37
9 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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