

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

- - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, June 9, 2009
10:20 a.m.

- - -

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

BILL 090445 - An ordinance authorizing the
President of the Fairmount Park Commission and
the Executive Director of Fairmount Park to
enter into a lease agreement between the City
of Philadelphia as landlord and the Center
City District as tenant...

- - -

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
3 morning and welcome to the Philadelphia
4 City Council Committee hearing of Parks,
5 Recreation and Cultural Affairs. We're
6 now going to move into a public hearing
7 to hear testimony on Bill No. 090445.

8 This morning we are joined by
9 Councilmembers Bill Greenlee and
10 Councilmember Frank DiCicco, and we will
11 now ask the Clerk to read the title of
12 Bill No. 090445.

13 THE CLERK: 090445, an
14 ordinance authorizing the President of
15 the Fairmount Park Commission and the
16 Executive Director of Fairmount Park to
17 enter into a lease agreement between the
18 City of Philadelphia as landlord and the
19 Center City District as tenant for a
20 certain parcel of land bounded by 18th
21 Street, Logan Square, the Benjamin
22 Franklin Parkway and Vine Street,
23 commonly referred to as Sister Cities
24 Plaza, under certain terms and
25 conditions.

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COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

We will now ask Mark Focht of the Fairmount Park and Nancy Goldenberg of the Center City District to please approach the witness table.

(Witnesses approached witness
table.)

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good morning.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

MS. GOLDENBERG: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please state your name for the record, and we'll start with Mark Focht, and proceed with your testimony.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

Thank you, Councilwoman Reynolds Brown and Committee members. I'm Mark Focht, the Executive Director of Fairmount Park. I'm pleased to appear before you today on behalf of Fairmount Park in full support of Council Bill No. 090445.

This section of Logan Square is currently comprised of open lawn, trees,

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2 two sculptures and a plaza, which
3 comprise Sister Cities, acknowledging the
4 Philadelphia Sister Cities International
5 program. The Sister Cities program
6 establishes special relationships to
7 improve political and economic ties with
8 various international cities such as
9 Florence, Italy; Tel Aviv, Israel; and
10 Kobe, Japan. The goal of the agreement
11 with the Center City District is to
12 enhance this portion of Logan Square in a
13 manner which properly recognizes the
14 Sister Cities program, while adding
15 additional amenities to engage residents,
16 visitors and tourists.

17 In undertaking this project,
18 the Center City District is continuing
19 its commitment to improve the public
20 realm of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in
21 partnership with Fairmount Park and our
22 many other partners. To date, this
23 commitment has resulted in beautiful
24 renovations of the Aviator Park section
25 of Logan Square and Three Parkway at 16th

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2 Street and the Parkway.

3 At a cost of over \$4 million,
4 this Sister Cities project will include
5 improved landscaping, new walkways, a new
6 paved plaza with a fountain and seating
7 area, acknowledging our Sister Cities,
8 extensive garden plantings and new
9 benches and lighting. Additionally, the
10 project includes a new Children's
11 Discovery Garden and park pavilion. The
12 pavilion will be an environmentally
13 sensitive structure, featuring a green,
14 vegetated roof and geothermal heating and
15 cooling system. The pavilion will house
16 a cafe and meeting room, which can be
17 separated from the cafe by a movable
18 partition. When fully opened, the
19 multi-purpose pavilion will provide
20 generous seating for special events,
21 functions or lectures.

22 Immediately adjacent to this
23 structure will be the Children's
24 Discovery Garden. This garden, modeled
25 on our own Wissahickon Valley, will

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2 stimulate a child's imagination through
3 engaged play in a natural environment.

4 The Fairmount Park Commission approved
5 the project's design at its May 20th,
6 2009 meeting. The Center City District
7 is in discussions with several
8 organizations about partnering in the
9 operation of both the Discovery Garden
10 and the park pavilion.

11 Before you today for your
12 consideration is an agreement that leases
13 this portion of Logan Square to the
14 Center City District, who will be fully
15 responsible for building, maintaining and
16 operating the improvements. This lease
17 has been modeled on the successful
18 agreement which transformed Three
19 Parkway, including the construction and
20 operation of Cafe Cret. The lease has a
21 15-year term.

22 The ordinance has been amended
23 to include as an exhibit the Economic
24 Opportunity Plan prepared by the Center
25 City District. This plan has been

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2 approved by the Office of Economic
3 Opportunity, and you will hear more about
4 it in a moment. The Center City District
5 will provide brief testimony on the
6 details of this plan. The lease document
7 before you today was also approved by the
8 Fairmount Park Commission on May 20th,
9 2009.

10 This agreement will improve the
11 physical environment in this section of
12 Logan Square, while providing a range of
13 exciting new experiences for residents,
14 visitors and tourists along the Benjamin
15 Franklin Parkway. It will also continue
16 our collective work to improve the
17 Parkway's public realm.

18 Therefore, I appear before you
19 today to pledge the support of Fairmount
20 Park staff for this legislation and
21 respectively ask this Committee and full
22 City Council to approve Bill No. 090445.

23 In addition, I ask that the
24 rules be suspended so that the ordinance
25 may be passed upon the second reading at

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2 Council.

3 Thank you, and I'd be pleased
4 to answer any questions.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
6 very much. Let's hear from our other
7 witness, Nancy Goldenberg, and then we'll
8 open it up for questions.

9 Good morning.

10 MS. GOLDENBERG: Good morning,
11 Councilwoman and members of the
12 Committee. My name is Nancy Goldenberg.
13 I'm the Vice-President of Planning at the
14 Center City District, and I am here to
15 offer the Center City District's full
16 support of Bill 090445, authorizing the
17 City of Philadelphia, through Fairmount
18 Park, to lease Sister Cities Park on
19 Logan Square to the CCD. This action
20 will enable the Center City District to
21 receive capital dollars from the
22 Commonwealth and proceed with plans to
23 renovate a relatively isolated and
24 inactive part of Logan Square into an
25 attractive park with activities for

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2 diverse populations of all ages.

3 The plans call for an improved
4 landscape that includes a new plaza
5 offering a formal setting for gatherings
6 immediately opposite the Cathedral and
7 celebrates Philadelphia's Sister Cities
8 in the surface of a new foundation. The
9 new paths, durable plant material that
10 offers seasonal interest, benches,
11 lighting, signage are all included in the
12 landscape plan and all conform to the
13 design guidelines for the Benjamin
14 Franklin Parkway.

15 Towards the northern portion of
16 the park, we plan a 3,000 square foot
17 multi-purpose pavilion to house a cafe
18 and meeting room in addition to the
19 functional requirements needed to service
20 the diverse needs of the adjacent
21 Children's Discovery Garden, which, as
22 Mark alluded to, aims to engage children
23 in a natural play environment that
24 represents a fragment of the Wissahickon
25 Valley ecosystem. The main room of the

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2 pavilion could be divided in half by
3 means of a partition to accommodate
4 different uses simultaneously. When
5 fully open, the multi-purpose pavilion
6 will provide generous seating for special
7 events, functions or lectures that might
8 be hosted within the space. Similar to
9 our cafe at 16th Street and the Parkway,
10 revenue for the operation of the pavilion
11 will be pledged towards maintenance of
12 the Park.

13 The entire project incorporates
14 multiple sustainable practices, including
15 a geothermal ground source heat pump, a
16 green roof, native plantings and radiant
17 floor. The building will be LEED
18 certified.

19 Funds for the 4.6 million
20 project have been secured, and we
21 received final approval from the Park
22 Commission at its May 20th meeting. We
23 expect to receive final approval from the
24 Art Commission at its July meeting. We
25 have also submitted and received approval

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2 of our Economic Opportunity Plan from the
3 Office of Economic Opportunity, and we
4 feel confident that our plan's
5 construction and workforce employment
6 goals of 40 percent resident, 25 percent
7 minority and five percent female can be
8 met, as can goals for contract ranges for
9 professional services and construction.

10 The CCD is currently in
11 discussion with a number of local
12 institutions with both management and
13 programming expertise that could
14 potentially operate the cafe and garden
15 and provide environmental education
16 programs as well. We have received a
17 great deal of interest in using the park
18 for educational purposes from nearby
19 institutions, like the Academy of Natural
20 Sciences, Friends Select, the Franklin
21 Institute and the Zoo, and we are very
22 optimistic that discussions with these
23 organizations and perhaps others such as
24 the School District and the Park and
25 Recreation Department will result in

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2 mutually beneficial collaborations and a
3 very successful business plan very soon.

4 In conclusion, we are very
5 excited about this project and the
6 support it has been afforded by the
7 Governor, the Mayor, Fairmount Park, our
8 philanthropic institutions and you, City
9 Council. We urge your passage of this
10 bill so that by this time next year you
11 can join us in cutting the ribbon on
12 Sister Cities Park.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
15 for your testimony.

16 And let the record show that
17 Councilman Frank Rizzo has joined us for
18 this Committee hearing.

19 Any questions for our
20 witnesses?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: You
23 answered them. When is it beginning?

24 MS. GOLDENBERG: Construction
25 is expected to begin about September and

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2 last about ten months.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Councilman
4 Bill Greenlee.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
6 you, Madam Chair. Just quickly a comment
7 more than a question. I think as the
8 Councilmember that lives the closest to
9 the Parkway, I will say that I think this
10 is a great idea. As Nancy mentioned,
11 this is a relatively isolated area, and
12 to bring life to that almost right in the
13 middle of the Parkway I think is a great
14 idea.

15 So best of luck.

16 MS. GOLDENBERG: Thank you.

17 MR. FOCHT: Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Mark
19 Focht, could you please discuss briefly
20 the process you went through to arrive at
21 these OEO numbers?

22 MR. FOCHT: Actually, they were
23 arrived at by the Center City District,
24 so I'll let Nancy speak to those.

25 MS. GOLDENBERG: We arrived at

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2 them through our past experience recently
3 with Cafe Cret at 16th and the Parkway
4 and also the design team that has been
5 put together. We have about 25 percent,
6 26 percent of that design team is
7 minority and female. So we're quite
8 confident that we can meet or exceed
9 these goals.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Cafe Cret,
11 is that one of the first success stories
12 where you set goals around OE0 and indeed
13 achieved them or are there others you'd
14 like to put on the record?

15 MS. GOLDENBERG: That is the
16 first major project that this is a model
17 for. So I would say that comes certainly
18 the closest. We've done many other
19 projects on the Parkway and throughout
20 the City, but I would say that cafe
21 project, which was successfully done and
22 met our goals, is the most closely
23 modeled to which we are doing Sister
24 Cities.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,

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2 then. Well, thank you for leading by
3 example.

4 Any other questions from
5 members of the Committee?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, this
8 will, therefore, then conclude testimony
9 on Bill No. 090445. This concludes our
10 public hearing and we will now move into
11 a public meeting.

12 I'd like to ask Councilman Bill
13 Greenlee to please make a motion on the
14 amendment to Bill No. 090445.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
16 you, Madam Chair. I move the approval of
17 the amendment to Bill No. 090445 as it
18 has been distributed.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Is there a
20 second?

21 (Duly seconded.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All in
23 favor say aye.

24 (Aye.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All

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2 opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The ayes
5 have it, and Bill No. 090445 has been
6 amended.

7 I'd now like to ask Councilman
8 Bill Greenlee to please make a motion on
9 Bill No. 090445, as amended, and reflect
10 a suspension of the rules.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
12 you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill No.
13 090445, as amended, be reported out of
14 this Committee with a favorable
15 recommendation and that, further, that
16 the rules of Council be suspended to
17 allow for first reading at our next
18 session of Council.

19 (Duly seconded.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Bill No.
21 090445 has been moved and seconded.

22 All in favor say aye.

23 (Aye.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All
25 opposed?

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2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thus, Bill
4 No. 090445 will be reported out of this
5 Committee with a favorable
6 recommendation, a further recommendation
7 that the rules of Council be suspended so
8 as to permit first reading at our next
9 scheduled Council meeting.

10 This concludes the meeting on
11 the Committee on Parks, Recreation and
12 Cultural Affairs.

13 Thank you for your attendance
14 and your good work.

15 (Committee on Parks, Recreation
16 and Cultural Affairs concluded at 10:30
17 a.m.)

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2 CERTIFICATE

3 I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
4 proceedings, evidence and objections are
5 contained fully and accurately in the
6 stenographic notes taken by me upon the
7 foregoing matter on June 9, 2009, and that
8 this is a true and correct transcript of same.

9
10
11
12
13
14 _____
15 MICHELE L. MURPHY
16 RPR-Notary Public
17
18

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