

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

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, May 1, 2014
2:15 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN

BILL 140180 - An ordinance amending an Ordinance (Bill No. 877), approved September 16, 1994, by amending an exhibit thereto...

BILL 140224 - An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to acquire title from the Salvation Army to a certain tract of land at the southeast corner of 22nd & Market Streets, known as 2140 Market Street...

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COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good afternoon. This hearing is called to order. This is a public hearing of the City Council Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, and the purpose of this public hearing is to hear testimony on Bill Nos. 140224 and 140180.

I want to recognize the presence of a quorum of Committee members and we have in attendance Council Majority Leader Curtis Jones, Jr., Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez, and Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

And did you have any opening remarks, Councilman?

COUNCILMAN JONES: No, not now.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Great. And if we can have the Clerk read the title of Bill No. 140224.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 140224, an ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to acquire title from the Salvation Army to a certain tract of land

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 at the southeast corner of 22nd and
3 Market Streets, known as 2140 Market
4 Street; and amending Chapter 15-200 of
5 The Philadelphia Code, entitled
6 "Fairmount Park," to make the parcel part
7 of the Fairmount Park System and to make
8 technical changes; all under certain
9 terms and conditions.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
11 And you want to call up the first panel
12 to testify.

13 THE CLERK: Deputy Mayor
14 Michael DiBerardinis and Mark Focht.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Who is
16 enthusiastic and couldn't wait to be
17 called forward, so he's here already.

18 Good afternoon.

19 COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:
20 Good afternoon, Councilwoman and
21 Committee members. Parks and
22 Recreation -- I'm Mike DiBerardinis,
23 Deputy Mayor and Commissioner of Parks
24 and Recreation.

25 Parks and Recreation is pleased

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 to be part of the City team working to
3 realize this important project. We thank
4 the Memorial Committee for their
5 dedication and perseverance. We also
6 thank the Salvation Army for working with
7 the City on a tight timeframe to
8 accomplish the donation of the site.

9 Once the site is acquired, it
10 will be become part of the Fairmount Park
11 and Recreation System. We are committed
12 to working closely with the Memorial
13 Committee on its design and approvals and
14 the construction process.

15 Therefore, I appear before you
16 to pledge the support of my department
17 for this legislation and respectfully ask
18 City Council to approve Bill No. 140224.

19 In addition, I respectfully
20 request that this Committee vote this
21 bill out of committee with a favorable
22 recommendation and that the rules be
23 suspended to permit first reading at the
24 next Council session.

25 Thank you very much.

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

3 Mark?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: No
5 testimony.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And just a
7 quick question and then we'll see if
8 anyone else has any other questions. And
9 I do want to acknowledge that Councilman
10 Henon has joined us. Thank you.

11 Quick question. So I know that
12 this actually also adds to the additional
13 parkland. Can you talk about that a
14 little bit.

15 COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:
16 Well, I think the site is quite small.
17 It's probably a quarter of an acre, a
18 third of an acre. That will become part
19 of the Park and Recreation Department,
20 and I think the important part about it,
21 it gives it the fullest care and
22 stewardship and protection as part of our
23 system. So it just becomes like
24 Rittenhouse Square, Franklin Square,
25 Fitler Square, any of the downtown parks.

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 It has that same status.

3 The Committee is raising funds
4 to do the construction, the design and
5 construction of the project, and our role
6 after that would be what we do with
7 our -- as we take care of the 125 or 130
8 neighborhood parks, same stuff, lawn
9 care, tree pruning, trash pickup, and any
10 repairs. So it gets those benefits as
11 well in the long term, the protection and
12 the long-term benefit of being part of
13 our system.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good.
15 And you said there were funds, private
16 funds, that are being raised right now.

17 COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: The
18 Committee members can -- I think they
19 will be testifying to that effect.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
21 Great. And the Parks and Rec Department
22 is going to work with the community and
23 the Committee for the design elements of
24 the park?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 Yes, Councilwoman. So there's a Memorial
3 Design Committee that I now sit on as the
4 representative of the City and Parks and
5 Recreation, and so there was recently a
6 committee meeting earlier this week and
7 we're moving forward with the design.

8 There was a public meeting about two or
9 three weeks ago to unveil the design to
10 the public, a very important milestone
11 and very responsive and positive from the
12 community members.

13 So I will now be part of the
14 Memorial Design Committee moving forward
15 through its implementation.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And you
17 said two weeks ago there was an unveiling
18 of what was it?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: The
20 conceptual design. So there's a
21 conceptual design.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is that
23 available for the members of this
24 Committee to review?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: We

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 don't have it with us today, but we can
3 provide it to you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: But you can
5 get it to us? That will be great. I
6 think everybody would like to just take a
7 sneak peak at what we're working on.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
9 Absolutely.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Great.
11 Does anyone else have any
12 questions?

13 Councilman Henon.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
15 Madam Chair.

16 Good afternoon.

17 COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:
18 Good afternoon.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: My question
20 is -- and I'm glad we're working as a
21 team, and the Parks and the Recs, you
22 have done an amazing job with inclusion
23 of all the stakeholders and people
24 involved.

25 Who is a part of the team in

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 being a part of making sure this becomes
3 a reality?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: I
5 think when -- there's a representative of
6 the Memorial Committee here to testify,
7 and he can provide you the --

8 COUNCILMAN HENON: I don't need
9 to know who is on them. So it's the
10 Friends of, it's the Department of Rec,
11 it's Public Property, it's --

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
13 It's Pennsylvania Horticulture Society,
14 who has been taking the lead on the
15 design. It's a number of -- there's a
16 public relations firm. There's a number
17 of law firms. There are a number of --
18 two landscape architectural firms, a few
19 contractors, all of whom have been
20 involved in the formation of the
21 Committee to move the project forward.

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: Great. And
23 that's all, and I just --

24 COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:
25 Councilman, I think there's a wealth of

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 expertise and experience that the
3 Committee and the Department and the City
4 bring to bear here, and I feel very
5 confident that we'll come up with a great
6 detailed design for this that will
7 encourage people to invest and be a place
8 where people really want to come and
9 spend time.

10 COUNCILMAN HENON: There is no
11 question. If history shows with the type
12 of collaboration that you have shown, I
13 think this is going to be spectacular and
14 a commendable way to memorialize the
15 unfortunate situation. So I appreciate
16 you to come and testify here today.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:
18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
20 Any other questions from the
21 Committee?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And I do
24 want to acknowledge that Councilman David
25 Oh has joined us. Thank you, Councilman.

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 Well, thank you very much.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT:

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Can we have
6 the Clerk call the next witness to
7 testify.

8 THE CLERK: Tad Decker.

9 (Witness approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
12 afternoon.

13 MR. DECKER: Good afternoon.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
15 state your name for the record and
16 proceed.

17 MR. DECKER: Thomas A. Decker,
18 D-E-C-K-E-R, also known as Tad, T-A-D.

19 COUNCILWOMAN Bass: And proceed
20 with your testimony.

21 MR. DECKER: Thank you.

22 Chairwoman Bass, Councilmembers Jones,
23 Reynolds Brown, Henon, Oh, and
24 Quinones-Sanchez, thank you for having us
25 today. Again, my name is Tad Decker.

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 I'm a member of the 22nd and Memorial
3 Park Committee. Nancy Winkler, our
4 Committee Co-Chair and the person
5 responsible for leading our efforts,
6 could not be with us today. She is out
7 of town on City business.

8 Again, thank you for inviting
9 us to testify. We also thank Council
10 President Clarke for supporting the
11 legislation, Mayor Nutter for working
12 with the Salvation Army on the agreement
13 to transfer the land and, of course,
14 Deputy Mayor Mike DiBerardinis for
15 working as the Mayor's representative on
16 our Committee, as well as Mark. They've
17 done a terrific job for us.

18 Our Committee began its
19 formation last summer following the
20 tragic events of June 5th at the
21 Salvation Army site. Our mission has
22 been and continues to be the creation of
23 a permanent park on the site of the
24 collapse and to send a message that human
25 life must be valued above development.

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 The park and memorial will
3 honor the six individuals who were
4 killed, crushed to death in the collapse
5 of the building. The victims included
6 Anne Bryan, Roseline Conteh, Borbor
7 Davis, Kimberly Finnegan, Juanita Harmon,
8 and Mary Simpson.

9 The park will honor them and
10 also create a quiet and peaceful place
11 where visitors can step away from the
12 rush of city life to a peaceful and
13 reflective setting.

14 I'd like to bring you up to
15 date on where our Committee stands with
16 respect to the design of the park.

17 The Pennsylvania Horticultural
18 Society has, as was already stated, taken
19 the lead on the project, headed by Chief
20 of Staff Nancy Goldenberg. Nancy and her
21 professional design team of landscape
22 architects have devoted countless hours
23 of pro bono time in preparing a concept
24 plan for the park.

25 We introduced the plan at a

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 community meeting to get feedback from
3 people who live in the neighborhood.
4 We've also posted the concept design on
5 our IndieGoGo website. And for the
6 record, it's [www.indiegogo.com/projects/](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/22nd-and-market-memorial-garden#home)
7 22nd-and-market-memorial-garden#home. I
8 guess hashtag is the right word these
9 days, right?

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yeah.

11 MR. DECKER: That's a long
12 address, as you've noted, but if you go
13 to indiegogo.com and search for 22nd and
14 Market Street, you'll get to the site.
15 Anyone can get to the site.

16 The Committee also has been
17 working with the Pennsylvania Academy of
18 the Fine Arts, or PAFA. They are taking
19 on the role of leading a design
20 competition for the memorial element that
21 will serve as the centerpiece of the
22 park.

23 Just yesterday, PAFA circulated
24 a request for proposals among PAFA
25 alumni, faculty, and students. One of

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 the victims was a student at PAFA, and
3 the school very much wants to honor her
4 by having one of its artists design the
5 memorial piece.

6 The two components, the
7 memorial and the overall design of the
8 park, will be integrated. Once PAFA
9 selects an artist and our Committee signs
10 off, as well as the City, that person
11 will be working closely with the
12 Horticultural Society to ensure the
13 memorial blends in perfectly with the
14 park.

15 Because we would like the park
16 to become a place that citizens of
17 Philadelphia will want to visit, we will
18 also invite input from urban design
19 experts, including architects, landscape
20 architects, lighting designers, and
21 artists.

22 The way the timing is working
23 out, we expect to have three art
24 finalists selected by the anniversary of
25 the collapse on June 5th of this year and

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 later in June to select the artist who
3 will be designing the memorial.

4 We currently project
5 construction of the park and memorial to
6 occur in the fall, but we have all
7 emphasized we want to get this exactly
8 right, even if that means extending the
9 schedule to get feedback from the array
10 of experts that I previously mentioned.

11 We plan to present the design
12 to the Art Commission by October and, if
13 all goes well, to build the park by the
14 end of the year. The actual construction
15 of the park will take about two weeks.

16 We continue to raise funds for
17 the park. We have set a goal of raising
18 \$250,000 in money and in-kind services,
19 and we are well on our way. We have
20 raised 25,000 on our IndieGoGo site and
21 we have pledges for more than \$100,000 to
22 date. We're feeling very confident that
23 we will meet our goal, but we still have
24 a ways to go. We would love to hit the
25 number by the June 5th anniversary, but

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 we also know we have until the fall to
3 raise all the money that's required.

4 I just want to say again we are
5 very grateful for all size donations. So
6 I would ask anyone watching this hearing
7 to please visit our website at -- I'm
8 going to do another commercial I guess
9 for the record -- [www.indiegogo.com/](http://www.indiegogo.com/project/22nd-and-market-memorial-garden#home)
10 [project/22nd-and-market-memorial-](http://www.indiegogo.com/project/22nd-and-market-memorial-garden#home)
11 [garden#home](http://www.indiegogo.com/project/22nd-and-market-memorial-garden#home) and contribute.

12 So to conclude, I respectfully
13 ask you to keep the victims of the
14 tragedy in mind and know that our efforts
15 are aimed at honoring their lives. Our
16 ultimate vision is to create a place of
17 contemplation to convey calmness and
18 serenity, a place where visitors can
19 pause, reflect, learn, and honor.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, thank
22 you for your testimony. And just a
23 couple of quick questions or actually
24 statements. The first is that a park is
25 a great thing, but this is something, as

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 I see it, as different. This is a park
3 with a purpose sort of.

4 MR. DECKER: We agree.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And I don't
6 know if the folks who were seriously
7 injured, if they're involved in the
8 planning as well, because unfortunately
9 six people lost their lives, but then
10 there were some others who were really
11 badly injured.

12 MR. DECKER: One in particular.
13 Very seriously injured.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

15 MR. DECKER: We are going to
16 have the representatives of the families
17 and the people that were injured
18 participate in looking at the designs as
19 they come off. They'll be invited to --
20 there's going to be an event on June 5th,
21 and all of the injured parties and the
22 families of those that have died are
23 going to be invited as well.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

25 Well, I think that this is really going

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 to take something very tragic and turn it
3 into something that's going to be a
4 wonderful addition for the neighborhood,
5 for the community, and really to, again,
6 be a place and a site of reflection,
7 particularly if you've had some sort of
8 impact with the tragedy that occurred, if
9 there's some sort of impact that it's had
10 on your life, if you've lost someone or
11 you know someone who was affected or even
12 if you used to go to the site there and
13 used to shop there and you just can't
14 believe what happened. I just think this
15 is going to be something that folks from
16 all over can come to, and I look forward
17 to its dedication. So I hope to be there
18 and to be able to support you all along
19 the way, so whatever we can do to be
20 helpful.

21 MR. DECKER: Thank you. You
22 can be sure you'll all be invited.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

24 Did anyone else have any
25 questions or statements?

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 (No response.)

3 MR. DECKER: Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
5 for your testimony.

6 And that concludes testimony on
7 Bill No. 140224.

8 Will the Clerk now read the
9 title of Bill No. 140180.

10 THE CLERK: Bill No. 140180, an
11 ordinance amending an Ordinance (Bill No.
12 877), approved September 16, 1994, by
13 amending an exhibit thereto, in order to
14 increase the limit of the amount of
15 funding any entity may receive in any
16 fiscal year from the Philadelphia
17 Activities Fund.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Can we have
19 the first panel called up to testify.

20 THE CLERK: Madam Chair, there
21 is no one here to testify on this bill.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
23 Well, this now concludes the public
24 hearing on the Committee on Parks,
25 Recreation and Cultural Affairs. We will

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 now go into our public meeting.

3 And I'd like to recognize
4 Councilman Henon for a motion on Bill No.
5 140224.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
7 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 140224
8 be reported out of this Committee with a
9 favorable recommendation and further that
10 the rules of Council be suspended to
11 permit first reading of this bill at our
12 next Council session.

13 (Duly seconded.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's been
15 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
16 140224 be reported from this Committee
17 with a favorable recommendation and
18 further moved that the rules of Council
19 be suspended as to permit first reading
20 at the next scheduled session of City
21 Council.

22 All those in favor say aye.

23 (Aye.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Those
25 opposed?

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And the
4 motion carries. Bill No. 140224 will be
5 reported from this Committee with a
6 favorable recommendation with a request
7 that the rules of Council be suspended to
8 permit first reading at the next session
9 of Council.

10 The Chair now recognizes
11 Councilmember Henon for a motion on Bill
12 No. 140108.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 140180
15 be reported from this Committee with a
16 favorable recommendation and further move
17 that the rules of Council be suspended to
18 permit first reading of this bill at our
19 next Council session.

20 (Duly seconded.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's been
22 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
23 140180 be reported from this Committee
24 without recommendation and further moved
25 that the rules of Council be suspended as

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 to permit first reading at the next
3 scheduled session of City Council.

4 All those in favor say aye.
5 (Aye.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
7 opposed?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The motion
10 carries and Bill No. 140180, as amended
11 [sic], will be reported from this
12 Committee without recommendation with a
13 request that the rules of Council be
14 suspended to permit first reading at the
15 next session of Council.

16 (Pause.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Actually,
18 we're going to go back for one second and
19 reread the -- or actually take another
20 vote on this, because it was actually a
21 favorable recommendation that was
22 provided from Councilman Henon.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
24 Madam Chair, for the correction. I move
25 that Bill No. 140180 be reported out of

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.
2 Committee with a favorable recommendation
3 as to be first read at the next Council
4 session.

5 (Duly seconded.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's been
7 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
8 140180 be reported from this Committee
9 with a favorable recommendation and
10 further moved that the rules of Council
11 be suspended as to permit first reading
12 at the next scheduled session of Council.

13 All those in favor say aye.

14 (Aye.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
16 opposed?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And the
19 motion carries and Bill No. 140180, as
20 amended, will be reported from this
21 Committee with a favorable recommendation
22 and with a request that the rules of
23 Council be suspended to permit first
24 reading at the next session of Council.

25 And with that, the business of

1 5/1/14 - PARKS - BILL 140180, etc.

2 this Committee is concluded. Thank you
3 for attending.

4 (Committee on Parks, Recreation
5 and Cultural Affairs concluded at 2:35
6 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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direct control and/or supervision of the
certifying reporter.)

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