

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

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, June 5, 2014
2:07 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS - CHAIR
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR. - VICE CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON

BILLS: 140417 and 140450

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COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good afternoon.

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This hearing is called to order.

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This is the Public Hearing on the City Council Committee of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. The purpose of this public hearing is to hear testimony on Bill No. 140417 and also Bill No. 140454.

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I want to recognize the presence of a quorum of committee members. To my right I have Council Majority Leader Curtis Jones, Jr., also I have Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown and Councilman Bobby Henon joining us.

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And any opening remarks from the committee?

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(No response.)

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COUNCILWOMAN BASS: With that, will the Clerk read the bill -- read the title of Bill No. 140417.

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THE CLERK: Bill No. 140417: An ordinance authorizing the Director of Finance to establish a Free Library Programs

1 and Facilities Fund in which revenue
2 generated from competitively awarded
3 agreements for the use of areas or
4 facilities in the Free Library System, may
5 be deposited for use to pay expenses for
6 programs and facilities in the Free Library
7 System, under certain terms and conditions.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Thank you.

9 Can we have the first panel come forward
10 to testify. If you want to call up the
11 first panel.

12 THE CLERK: Siobhan Reardon.

13 (Witness approaches Witness Table.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good afternoon.

15 MS. REARDON: Good afternoon.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please state your
17 name for the record and then begin your
18 testimony.

19 MS. REARDON: I'm Siobhan Reardon,
20 President Director of the Free Library of
21 Philadelphia.

22 Committee Chair Bass and Members of the
23 Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural
24 Affairs, as I stated, I'm Siobhan Reardon,

1 President Director of the Free Library of
2 Philadelphia. And I am delighted to be here
3 this afternoon to testify on Bill No.
4 140417, creating a Free Library and
5 Facilities Fund.

6 Significant work is taking place at
7 Parkway Central, the main library of the
8 library system. We have completed major
9 renovations to the fourth floor,
10 transforming 11,000 square feet from a dingy
11 underutilize space into a state-of-the-art
12 conference and event facility. The
13 renovated Skyline Room has three retractable
14 screens, WiFi and the ability to accommodate
15 240 guests.

16 There are three adjoining conference
17 rooms, each of which has LED screens that
18 can be merged into a single or separate
19 adjoining space to accommodate 100 people.
20 A culinary literacy -- a culinary literacy
21 demonstration kitchen features convection
22 ovens, a walk-in refrigerator, filming
23 capacity among other amenities.

24 The total cost of the renovation was 9.2

1 million paid through a public private
2 partnership and was completed in 16 months.
3 The new spaces will be used for a wide range
4 of public programming, including seminars
5 for entrepreneurs and small business owners,
6 senior citizens and job seekers.

7 The kitchen will offer culinary literacy
8 classes from programs ranging from ESL
9 classes from restaurant workers who are
10 primarily Spanish speaking, to cooking for
11 children and teens, nutritional and healthy
12 lifestyle food preparation for families is
13 another.

14 When not in use for these purposes, we
15 plan to rent the space to generate earned
16 income. It is an ideal setting for
17 weddings, social events and corporate
18 gatherings and will create a valuable new
19 source of new revenue for the Library. Bill
20 No. 140417 will create a dedicated program
21 and facilities fund for the dollars brought
22 in by these rentals.

23 Further, it will enable the Library to
24 retain a substantial portion of these funds

1 to promote, operate and maintain the new
2 space. Ultimately, if sufficient dollars
3 are brought in to cover these costs, we hope
4 to expend any remaining revenues on our work
5 throughout the City. In a time of scarce
6 public resources, we are pleased to have
7 identified a source of earned income that
8 will support both the Library's work and the
9 City's general fund. I invite you to visit
10 at any time for a tour of our spectacular
11 new space.

12 I respectfully request that the
13 Committee vote out Bill No. 140417 with a
14 favorable recommendation, and suspend the
15 Rules of Council in order to permit first
16 reading at the next session.

17 I'll be happy to answer any questions.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you for your
19 testimony. I just have a couple of
20 questions.

21 The first is from your testimony, that
22 you would invite us to visit and tour and
23 see the space. And I want to take you up on
24 that offer.

1 MS. REARDON: Please do.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And at this time,
3 extend also an invitation to all my
4 colleagues that maybe if we could go as a
5 unit to come and see the space and see
6 exactly what it is that you've described
7 here, because it really sounds fantastic.

8 I'm a huge fan, obviously, of the
9 library system. I consider myself a library
10 kid growing up at the Widener Branch on
11 Lehigh Avenue, 26th and Lehigh. It's now
12 moved a few blocks down, but that was my
13 local library. In between there and the
14 main branch, I spent quite a bit of time in
15 my youth growing up. It really did open my
16 eyes, expand my horizon, let me see so much
17 of what the world has to offer through
18 reading, through books, through literacy.
19 Obviously, I'm a huge fan of the work that
20 is done through the library system.

21 And so, one of the things that you
22 mentioned also I want to touch on is, you
23 know, you said that you hope to expend any
24 remaining revenues on work throughout the

1 City. And I wondered if you could expound
2 on that. Because, you know, it's great to,
3 you know, say, well, hopefully we will have
4 some money left over; and if we do, we will
5 spend it in the neighborhoods.

6 Versus, is there a commitment to spend
7 money in the neighborhood? How is that
8 exactly going to work? Because we really
9 need to see some of those revenues trickle
10 into our neighborhood branches, as well.

11 MS. REARDON: Sure. It's actually a
12 commitment to spend it in the neighborhood
13 libraries. So if you're to look at probably
14 one of the biggest expenses we have where we
15 would need additional support would be in
16 some of the smaller capital projects, you
17 know. Some of these things that take -- you
18 know, in order for us to quickly deal with a
19 boiler replacement or a leaky roof, it would
20 be -- this fund would be able to support
21 that.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good.

23 MS. REARDON: We also need additional
24 programming support as we begin to change

1 out the kind of work our staff do to be much
2 more outwardly facing into community. So,
3 additional support for programming early
4 literacy services after school, homework
5 help, that sort of thing.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Do you have any
7 revenue projections?

8 MS. REARDON: Yes. We do have a
9 projection for this year. We expect to
10 make 150 -- we hope to bring in around
11 \$150,000 for Fiscal Year 15.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

13 MS. REARDON: So because we don't know
14 the full -- this is a brand new space and we
15 don't have -- you know, we are projecting
16 the operating costs, so we are careful about
17 saying, yes, exactly. We don't -- you never
18 know what's going to come up in the space,
19 as well.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Sure.

21 MS. REARDON: But yes, there is the
22 commitment to also program in the
23 neighborhoods.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

1 MS. REARDON: All right?

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.

3 Any other questions from the Committee?

4 No? Okay.

5 Well, thank you very much for your
6 testimony today. Is there anyone else here
7 who wants to testify on this bill? No?
8 Okay. And that concludes testimony on Bill
9 No. 140417.

10 If the clerk will now read the title of
11 Bill No. 140450.

12 THE CLERK: Bill No. 140450: An
13 ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of
14 Parks and Recreation and the Commissioner of
15 Public Property on behalf of the City of
16 Philadelphia, to enter into an agreement to
17 lease to Temple University an interior
18 portion of the East Park Canoe House located
19 on Kelly Drive, under certain terms and
20 conditions.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I know that
22 this bill will be amended. And the
23 amendment has been circulated to Members of
24 the Committee, and is available at the table

1 to my left if anyone else has not seen a
2 copy of that yet. And with that, if we want
3 to call up the first panel to testify.

4 THE CLERK: Mike DiBerardinis and
5 Kenneth Lawrence.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: "The" Kenneth
7 Lawrence?

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The one and only.
9 And I want to state for the record before we
10 begin that Councilman Johnson has joined us.

11 (Panel approaches Witness table.)

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

15 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: Thank you,
16 Chairman -- Chairwoman Bass and the
17 Committee Members. My name is Michael
18 DiBerardinis, Deputy Mayor and Commissioner
19 of Philadelphia Department of Parks and
20 Recreation.

21 I am pleased to appear before you today
22 on behalf of the department to testify in
23 support of Bill No. 140450, which authorizes
24 the City to enter into an agreement to lease

1 to Temple University an interior portion of
2 the East Park Canoe House located on Kelly
3 Drive, under certain terms and conditions.

4 The East Park Canoe House is an historic
5 structure on Kelly Drive, south of the
6 Strawberry Mansion Bridge, which housed
7 Temple University's Rowing Program, the
8 Philadelphia Police Marine Unit and several
9 high school rowing programs until the
10 building was deemed structurally deficient
11 by the Department of License and Inspection
12 in 2008.

13 Since that time, Temple has operated
14 their collegiate rowing program from
15 temporary tents located adjacent to the
16 Canoe House. Thanks to funding provided
17 from the City's Capital Program and
18 contribution from Temple University, the
19 City is prepared to undertake a 5.5 million
20 restoration of the East Park Canoe House,
21 which will include new public restrooms,
22 office and boat storage for the Philadelphia
23 Police Marine Unit and locker rooms, offices
24 and a training space and boat storage for

1 Temple's Men's and Women's Rowing Program.

2 Upon completion of the renovations,
3 Temple will occupy portions of the building
4 based on the proposed terms before you
5 today. As a consideration of their tenancy,
6 Temple will provide rowing instruction to
7 100 middle school students each summer as
8 well as inviting the students to join
9 Temple's new North Philadelphia Community
10 Outreach Initiative "Experience Temple."
11 Representatives from the university
12 will provide more information about this
13 initiative as part of their testimony.

14 Therefore, I appear before you to pledge
15 support of the Department of Parks and
16 Recreation for this legislation. And
17 respectfully ask City Council to approve
18 Bill No. 140450. In addition, I
19 respectfully request that this committee
20 vote this bill out of committee with a
21 favorable recommendation. And that the
22 rules be suspended to permit first reading
23 at the next council session.

24 Thank you. And I'll be happy to answer

1 any questions.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Thank you.

3 Ken, do you want to state your name for
4 the record?

5 MR. LAWRENCE: Yes. I'm Ken Lawrence.
6 I'm Senior Vice President for Government,
7 Community and Public Affairs at Temple
8 University. Thank you for this opportunity.

9 We have submitted our written testimony,
10 which is very similar to the Parks and
11 Recreation Committee. So, I can read it for
12 the record if you want, or I'd be happy to
13 answer questions or talk about some more of
14 the specifics at your --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I think -- it
16 has been submitted, so we do have it for the
17 record. If there is anything -- you know, I
18 was looking forward to hearing you speak
19 specifically about the "Experience Temple"
20 component.

21 MR. LAWRENCE: Yes. The Experience
22 Temple Program is a new community outreach
23 program we are developing. We started it
24 specifically for North Philadelphia, but now

1 we are going to expand it with this
2 initiative with the City. Where it will be
3 a nine-month program where we will bring
4 middle school students to the campus once or
5 twice a month, and they will learn about
6 different aspects of the college life from
7 financial aid to scholarship. The idea
8 being to start them early in preparing and
9 looking to go to college and understanding
10 what they need to do through that.

11 We will have people from admissions
12 speak to them. And we're very excited about
13 that program.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And I notice
15 you just mentioned that it was expanded
16 from -- it was originally just a North
17 Philadelphia Program?

18 MR. LAWRENCE: When it was initially
19 conceived, it was a North Philadelphia
20 Program. We were just going to work in ZIP
21 codes within North Philadelphia. Through
22 working with Councilman Jones, who I want to
23 thank for introducing and championing this
24 legislation, we are now expanding it. And

1 we will include the students who go to the
2 rowing camps. They'll actually become a
3 part of the program, as well.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. All right.
5 Expand it to the Councilman's area, I'm
6 sure.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: No. It's city-wide.
8 City-wide.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And so, was
10 it 100 middle school slots previously? Or,
11 you know, in terms of the expansion. You're
12 not just expanding in terms of --

13 MR. LAWRENCE: The 100 students who will
14 do the rowing will have access to the
15 program. We haven't worked out how many
16 will be beyond that then. I think initially
17 we were looking at, like, 50 students
18 working just with middle schools within
19 North Philadelphia.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

21 MR. LAWRENCE: So but these 100 -- our
22 100 campers will automatically become a part
23 of that program, as well.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good. Very

1 good. All right.

2 And, Mr. Majority Leader.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam
4 Chair. And thank you for moving this piece
5 of legislation.

6 I think it's worthwhile to see
7 public-private partnerships like this. We
8 need to see more of it to stretch City
9 dollars, to complement shrinking dollars
10 within the University setting. We always
11 think of just us with budget issues, but
12 also state-run universities are being
13 jeopardized with higher tuitions and things
14 like that. Had to experience some of your
15 cuts in your own program. The more we do
16 this kind of thing, Madam Chair, the better
17 it is.

18 Just a few questions. You talked about
19 the rowing program for the East Park Canoe
20 House and the expansion of that.

21 How much money, for the record, are we
22 talking about collectively between the two
23 entities to improve this?

24 MR. LAWRENCE: From Temple University,

1 through the generosity of Mr. Lenfest, who
2 is a trustee of the University, he will be
3 contributing \$3 million towards the
4 renovation.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: And our
6 commitment is to support during the summer
7 to add additional staff to the -- to our
8 existing rowing program. So, we see this as
9 an extension of our existing rowing program.
10 We have a six-week program already. So --
11 and this -- with older high school age young
12 people.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: And this is --

14 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: This kind of
15 moves from middle school to high school. We
16 have a -- we met with Temple numerous times
17 on this. We are willing in our summer
18 programs to build up whatever capacity we
19 need to give -- let me just roll back a
20 little bit.

21 We have a commitment to bringing more
22 young people to the river and more young
23 people who have not had a chance to be on
24 the river to get them there and to have that

1 experience, some sort of river experience.
2 Sometimes it's outdoor recreation and
3 hiking, and sometimes it's being on the
4 river in a -- like as part of a crew team
5 and learning how to row.

6 So, we see this as a great opportunity
7 to -- over time as this building gets
8 renovated and as Temple reestablishes their
9 program, our ability to bring more young
10 people to the river and connect up to a big
11 institution in the process. So, we're
12 excited about it because it gives us a
13 chance to vary our youth programs, give them
14 more depth and more diversity, and to get
15 more young people connected to the river and
16 a chance to actually be on the river.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Particularly in
18 non-traditional sports for inner city kids.
19 I think it's appropriate to expose them to
20 other opportunities to find their way on a
21 college campus.

22 Will the public still have access to
23 this launch out there from time.

24 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: I'm going to

1 let Mark answer that question.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Good
3 afternoon.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good afternoon.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Mark Focht,
6 First Deputy Commissioner of Philadelphia
7 Parks and Recreation.

8 Councilman, yes. The laun -- the dock
9 and the launch area will be publicly
10 accessible. That is specifically a
11 condition in our lease with Temple, that
12 they do not have exclusive access to the
13 public dock. The dock remains public.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, Dr. Lawrence,
15 Mr. DiBerardinis and my good friend
16 Commissioner Focht, I'm excited about this.
17 I think it expands the horizons of kids from
18 around the City.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: And gives them a
21 pathway to college that might not have been
22 afforded to them. So, thank you. And keep
23 up this kind of work.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Madam Chair.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And I want to also
3 applaud the work that you're doing to get
4 more young people out to have this
5 experience.

6 What about older people? 46 year-old
7 women -- no. Just kidding.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: You made the -- you
9 mad the challenge -- wait a minute. You
10 made the challenge about the Library. I'm
11 going to make the challenge, let's go on the
12 river. We'll go out there.

13 (Committee Laughter.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: We'll talk later.
15 Calling me out on it.

16 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown
17 next.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you
19 very much. I would like some clarity on the
20 record.

21 The restrooms will or will not be
22 available for the public.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: The
24 restrooms are publicly accessible.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

2 Speak, if you would, Commissioner
3 DiBerardinis to what currently exists with
4 regards to rowing programs.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: We have a
6 summer program, six weeks -- eight weeks
7 between 125 and 130 young people in two-week
8 sessions. So and it's -- we expanded that.
9 It was an existing program. When the
10 merger -- after the merger, we expanded the
11 program to try to meet the demand.

12 So, that's what we currently do right
13 now every summer.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: With the
15 partnership --

16 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: And that's
17 at Lloyd Hall. That operates out of Lloyd
18 Hall. And as Mark just reminded me, it's a
19 free program for those young people that are
20 interested.

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: And so,
22 with the partnership with Temple and given
23 this -- this expanded enterprise, you'll be
24 able to grow that from 100 to X-number of

1 young people.

2 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: There will
3 be a 100 new -- new slots.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: And in
6 addition to that, and we work really hard
7 with Temple to imagine a year-round program.
8 So, we wanted to use the summer as a
9 springboard to keep kids engaged in the
10 winter, and then introduce them to new
11 opportunities.

12 Again, since the merger, Councilwoman
13 Brown, we have this idea of helping kids
14 succeed. That's one of our big missions in
15 our programs. And part of helping kids
16 succeed is to sort of give them an
17 opportunity to imagine themselves in a --

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yeah.
19 Non-traditional --

20 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: Exactly.
21 Got them on the river and rowing. Now I'm
22 at Temple and I'm learning about what they
23 have to offer. So, it really helps us
24 advance the work of the new department. And

1 we're really excited about this opportunity
2 and extending this program over time with
3 Temple.

4 MR. LAWRENCE: Councilwoman, if I can
5 just add.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Please.

7 MR. LAWRENCE: We'll actually start our
8 program at an earlier age level than the
9 Department currently starts now. So, the
10 kids will get exposure at an earlier age.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

12 MR. LAWRENCE: And then they can move up
13 through the Parks and Rec Program.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: How are
15 the young people recruited? How are they
16 identified?

17 MR. LAWRENCE: We would be happy to
18 accept any suggestions you have and work
19 with Councilman Jones on that. But we
20 haven't determ -- we haven't gotten that far
21 yet on how we'll recruit.

22 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: We
23 recruit -- for our current program, we
24 recruit all over the City. Our -- I mean,

1 you go and see the kids on the river in the
2 summer and they're from every neighborhood.
3 So, it really meets our goal of providing a
4 quality experience to young people from
5 every neighborhood and to really open up the
6 river to as many interested young people as
7 we can handle.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: That's
10 what I need to hear. That the folks who
11 ultimately have this experience, they look
12 like Philadelphia. That matters.

13 Too often we end up creaming off the top
14 with kids whose parents are paying attention
15 to these kind of opportunities and require
16 their kids to get involved. To the extent
17 that we, in government, can insist that the
18 picture of those young people participating,
19 it's good for everybody. It's really good
20 for everybody. I'm thrilled to hear about
21 that.

22 To Councilman Jones' point regarding how
23 important it is for the higher education
24 community to do its part can't be spoken

1 loud enough, particularly as we look at
2 what's happening with the School District.
3 There is a lot of quiet noise percolating
4 about how institutions can or should do more
5 and everybody has their opinion about that.
6 So, to see these type of program
7 partnerships connecting with government to
8 better serve young people says that the
9 higher community is doing this part and
10 more. So, that's great news.

11 That gets to all of my points, all of my
12 questions. Thank you.

13 Thank you, Ms. Chair Lady.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you. Thank
15 you for your questions.

16 And, Ken, you just mentioned that you
17 would take any suggestions. So, I would
18 like to take an opportunity to invite the
19 Members of the Committee and actually other
20 Members of Council to forward suggestions to
21 you. And maybe have some sort of an
22 opportunity to sit down and discuss those at
23 some point in the future.

24 MR. LAWRENCE: Absolutely.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: When you
2 say suggestions, you mean organizations?
3 Churches?

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: "Row, row, row your
5 boat, gently down the stream."

6 MR. LAWRENCE: Absolutely. Helping us
7 with the outreach.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I'm sorry.
9 What did you say.

10 MR. LAWRENCE: Helping the outreach.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Thank you.
12 Councilman Henon who has a song.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Madam Chair, look it,
14 who doesn't like "Row, row, row your boat"?

15 Thank you for coming in. And Madam
16 Chair, I appreciate this. The Councilwoman
17 was talking about the programs and the
18 outreach that the City performs. As you
19 well know, being Chair of this committee and
20 the work with our Parks and Recs, the
21 programs of this City couldn't be better.
22 And they couldn't be more thoughtful in the
23 outreach that they have with every community
24 in the City of Philadelphia. All the

1 friends groups, the communities, the ability
2 to leverage public-private partnerships is
3 incredible. And I haven't seen this before.

4 Not only am I glad to see Temple be a
5 part of it, I'm especially glad to see
6 Mr. Lawrence here in front of us touting the
7 commitment that Temple has in making sure
8 that that happens.

9 You know, the programs are more
10 advanced. They are extremely efficient and,
11 I think, inclusive doesn't say enough for
12 the amount of opportunities that we have of
13 exposure from an arts and culture, from
14 opportunities in, you know, even lacrosse
15 and some of the other programs that make up
16 the camps. As a matter of fact, I know that
17 they are making conservative efforts to
18 include more folks to the recs that aren't a
19 part of the camps to participate in some of
20 the friends groups and some of the
21 Department of Recs opportunities.

22 So the -- to Temple, to Parks and Recs,
23 kudos to your ability to leverage, you know,
24 the City and private dollars in these kinds

1 of partnerships. We see it within the
2 collaborative effort within, you know, the
3 Councilmembers and leveraging the dollars,
4 the capital dollars in -- where there is
5 shortfalls with the friends and the
6 stormwater and growing greener. So this is,
7 you know, one of those hearings and one of
8 those bills that we all should be thrilled
9 of to participate in.

10 And we should -- we should tell
11 everybody a lot of the good things that we
12 do. Because all too often we read in the
13 newspaper or we hear some of the critics on
14 what we're not doing. We are doing a lot
15 here in the City of Philadelphia.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Absolutely.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Doing a lot with the
18 great institutions that are fabric of all
19 our neighbors. Temple is growing. I'm glad
20 that they're growing. I am glad they sent
21 down one of their finest, Mr. Lawrence, in
22 testifying here.

23 So, you know, it's my privilege to be a
24 part of this. And, you know, anything that

1 we can do accept row ourselves, all right,
2 you know, we will see to it.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's a challenge?

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Listen, that is a
5 challenge on the table. I'm ready to go
6 out.

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: I did Lloyd Hall. I
8 did work as an electrician on Lloyd Hall. I
9 was -- I was glad that the renovations
10 were -- was a different boat house, because
11 then you would have been fixing my mistakes.

12 (Laughter.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: But there were none.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: We are proud. We are
15 proud, extremely proud of Boathouse Row and
16 the access to the river and what it
17 represents. You know, as a part of Local 98
18 when, you know, Parks and Recs were lit up
19 with the new LED lights that light up every
20 picture across this country when -- when you
21 see the river and the access. Now everybody
22 is going to have that opportunity to go
23 there and try new things and walk it and row
24 it and be a part of it.

1 So, it's good. You know, we do good
2 stuff here. So, thank you all for coming.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right. Thank
4 you, Councilman. And I think that's --
5 actually, we have one other panel to
6 testify.

7 Anyone else? Any other comments,
8 questions, suggestions? Okay. Thank you
9 very much for your testimony.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: Thank you.

11 MR. LAWRENCE: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And can we call up
13 the next witness.

14 THE CLERK: Kathryn Ott Lovell.

15 MS. LOVELL: Good afternoon.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good afternoon. How
17 are you?

18 MS. LOVELL: My name is Kathryn Ott
19 Lovell. I'm the Executive Director of the
20 Fairmount Park Conservancy. We are the
21 nonprofit organization that exists to
22 champion Philadelphia's parks. On behalf of
23 the Fairmount Park Conservancy, it's my
24 pleasure to be here today to express our

1 support of Bill 140450, which allows the
2 City to lease the East Park Canoe House to
3 Temple University.

4 In January of 2013, the Board of the
5 Fairmount Park Conservancy publicly
6 expressed its desire for Temple, in
7 partnership with Philadelphia Parks and
8 Recreation, to consider the adaptive reuse
9 of the historic East Park Canoe House as a
10 new home for its renowned rowing program.
11 We are thrilled that this compromise has
12 been made and immensely grateful to
13 Mr. Lenfest for his extraordinary support of
14 this worthy endeavor. We applaud Temple's
15 commitment to community outreach efforts and
16 to partner with Philadelphia Parks and
17 Recreation and the Philadelphia City Rowing
18 Program to connect more young people to the
19 river and to the sport of rowing.

20 As an organization which focuses on the
21 conservation of Fairmount Park and its
22 assets, the Conservancy strongly supports
23 this solution which accommodates Temple
24 University's interest in having a permanent

1 home for its rowing program on the
2 Schuylkill River while rescuing this
3 valuable park asset and restoring the site
4 to its former glory. The Conservancy
5 believes in the power of public-private
6 partnerships. And we see this lease as an
7 example of the success we can create when
8 City resources are leveraged with private
9 support. We are indeed stronger together.

10 The Fairmount Park Conservancy
11 encourages City Council to approve this
12 bill. And we invite Temple to join our ever
13 growing army of Park Champions who work to
14 help us build and maintain our beloved park
15 system.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you very much
18 for your testimony. I want to thank you for
19 the work that you do in the Conservancy, you
20 know, for always being here, an advocate and
21 for working so hard to make sure that our
22 Parks and Recreation System is what it is,
23 which is absolutely phenomenal.

24 I also want to just go on record and

1 acknowledge that we did receive testimony
2 from Nancy Goldenberg from the Commission on
3 Parks and Recreation, and also from Mr. JR
4 Hanna from the Dad Vail Regatta Organizing
5 Committee and Margaret Meigs from the
6 Schuylkill Navy of Philadelphia. And, you
7 know, a number of others including the
8 Philadelphia Parks Alliance and Lauren
9 Bornfriend, don't want to forget Lauren, and
10 so many others. So, we do want to
11 acknowledge all of your support for this
12 effort. Thank you so much.

13 Also, Councilman -- Majority Leader
14 Jones had a question.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah. I just want to
16 echo the Chairwoman's remarks about the
17 Conservancy. Most recently with the
18 Parkside Philadelphia Pump Track and some of
19 the plans that are on East Parkside to do,
20 it just enhances the nature experience with
21 the recreation twist that allows people to
22 use it more. And so, thank you for your
23 vision and your cooperation with all of the
24 departments and folks like us elected

1 officials who don't get it often, but
2 eventually get it. So thank you.

3 MS. LOVELL: Thank you all. Thanks for
4 the opportunity to be here. And thanks for
5 your continued support.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
7 Councilwoman Brown.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yes. I do
9 have a follow-up question regarding the Dad
10 Vail Regatta that I would like to pose to
11 the Commissioner if he can come back to the
12 witness table.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Having
15 heard the good news that young people from
16 across the City are captured with the rowing
17 experience sponsored by the Rec Department,
18 is there a pipeline for the training of
19 young people in rowing who for sure are
20 amateurs and creating an experience for them
21 where they can be fed into the crew world,
22 if you will?

23 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: If you don't
24 mind, I will have First Deputy Focht answer.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Indeed,
3 Councilwoman, there is. Folks that graduate
4 from our program or go through our summer
5 program, and many times they are returnees
6 that come multiple years over, feed into a
7 program called the Philadelphia City Rowing
8 Program.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: PCR. PCR is
11 a separate nonprofit that runs rowing on the
12 river throughout the year.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Very good.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: They share
15 facilities. They have outdoor facilities at
16 Lloyd Hall and then they also have indoor
17 facilities throughout the City that they use
18 in the off season for training.

19 Then the graduates from PCR compete
20 competitively in what are called the Manny
21 Flick Regattas. Manny Flick are kind of the
22 entrance level regattas. Those are the ones
23 that occur on the Schuylkill River in April.
24 So, they are the first --

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yes. Yes.
2 Yes.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: They are the
4 first regattas at the beginning of the
5 season.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Yes. I am
7 familiar with them.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: They run on
9 four consecutive weekends.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Is that
11 the high school level?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Yes.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Then that
15 feeds basically folks that come out of our
16 program, which is a summer run program, feed
17 into PCR. PCR feeds into the Manny Flicks.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Very good.
19 Any of our area schools, have we gotten to a
20 point here where area high schools can be a
21 part of this experience you're talking
22 about?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Yes.

24 Actually, I mean, several area high schools

1 used to have their headquarters in the East
2 Park Canoe House. But unfortunately, many
3 high schools have cut rowing from tier
4 curriculum because of, obviously, budget
5 constraints. So, we engage individual high
6 school students in our programs.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: I see.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: And many
9 athletic directors at high schools or
10 coaches at high schools are kind of the
11 feeder to us of students that express
12 interests to their coaches about rowing.
13 And if the schools don't have programs, and
14 to my knowledge currently no schools have
15 programs, then they are fed into our program
16 and into PCR and then into the Flicks.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: So, the
18 last question is for your program and the
19 feeder program, are their scholarship
20 opportunities for those young people?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Well, our
22 programs are free. The program run -- the
23 eight-week summer camp run by Parks and
24 Recreation is free.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Right.

2 But if they get to that level of
3 proficiency, if you will, is there
4 opportunity for those young people who get
5 to that level of proficiency to be
6 considered for crew scholarships at area
7 schools like a Temple?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: I would
9 imagine, but I don't know that as a fact.

10 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: We don't
11 have a formal connection between anything we
12 do and the universities right now. This is
13 Temple relationship --

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Partnership
15 --

16 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: Could begin
17 that pipeline.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay. All
19 right then. I asked because I'm very
20 familiar with those experiences down there
21 on the Drive and on Saturday and Sunday
22 mornings. And it is terrific to see young
23 people, the spectrum down there having that
24 very rich water experience. Me, not

1 included ever. I'm truly a spectator.

2 And so, but I think where there -- where
3 we can craft opportunities to really have a
4 pipeline that leads to -- because young
5 people actually do get crew scholarships to
6 then go on and pay for part of their college
7 experience, is something work exploring.
8 Thank you.

9 Thank you, Ms. Chairwoman.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you. And just
11 a couple quick questions. I wasn't familiar
12 with the Philadelphia City Rowing Program.
13 It's an eight-week program, a free program?
14 Oh, I'm sorry. Two separate things? I'm
15 confusing them.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Our program
17 that's run through Parks and Recreation is
18 an eight-week program, four two-week
19 sessions that's free. Works out of Lloyd
20 Hall. And we take 35 to 40 students in each
21 session. That's what the Commissioner was
22 referencing. It was formerly called the
23 Fairmount Park Rowing Program when we were
24 two separate agencies.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Sure.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: At that time
3 we ran three two-week sessions, so six
4 weeks. And in the merger, we put more
5 resources into it, which required buying an
6 additional boat and things like that. And
7 now we run eight weeks. So, that's during
8 the summer.

9 PCR is a completely separate nonprofit.
10 They have their own board of director.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I see.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: They run
13 basically a school-year based program. And
14 we -- we provide them with outdoor storage
15 space at Lloyd Hall where they store their
16 boats. And then they work out of several of
17 the rowing clubs on the Schuylkill on Boat
18 House Row and other places where they have
19 facilities where they do indoor training,
20 both academic training and athletic
21 training.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. It's good to
23 know. I mean, there is just such a wealth
24 of information in terms of programs and

1 activities that really are available to our
2 young people. I just signed my
3 five-year-old daughter up for the Ed Snyder
4 Youth Hockey League.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOCHT: Oh, great.

6 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: Great.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And I don't know how
8 much longer she is going to stay in it, but
9 it's a great experience and opportunity to
10 have exposure to all sorts of different
11 things that you might not normally have in
12 one's neighborhood.

13 So, Councilman -- member Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: I've seen a picture
15 of her daughter in her full regalia. She's
16 fierce.

17 Crew is for men and rowing is for women.
18 I learned that from Temple and Mr. Lawrence.
19 I just wanted to put that on record. So as
20 we make those distinguishing points, now you
21 will probably pass some legislation to
22 change it, make it inner gender-wise.
23 That's fine. I just wanted to put it on the
24 record.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you. Okay.

2 And so, any other questions? Anyone else to
3 testify on this bill?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Thank you
6 very much.

7 DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS: Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And this now
9 concludes the Public Hearing on the
10 Committee of Parks, Recreation and Cultural
11 Affair. And we will now go into our Public
12 Meeting.

13 - - -

14 (At this time, Public Hearing ends and
15 Public Meeting commences.)

16 - - -

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And I want to
18 recognize Majority Leader Jones for a motion
19 on Bill No. 140417.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam
21 chair. I move that Bill No. 140417 be
22 reported from this Committee with a
23 favorable recommendation. And further move,
24 that the Rules of Council be suspended to

1 permit first reading of this bill at our
2 next session of Council.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Second.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. It's been
5 moved an properly seconded that Bill No.
6 140417 be reported from this Committee with
7 a favorable recommendation; and further
8 move, that the Rules of Council be suspended
9 as to permit first reading at the next
10 scheduled session of City Council.

11 All those in favor say aye.

12 (Ayes.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And the motion
16 carries. And Bill No. 140417 will be
17 reported from Committee with a favorable
18 recommendation with a request that the Rules
19 of Council be suspended to permit first
20 reading at the next session of Council.

21 And I now want to recognize
22 Councilmember Jones for a motion on Bill No.
23 140450.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Again, thank you

1 Madam Chair. I offer the amendment to Bill
2 No. 140450, which has been properly
3 circulated. The amendment attached to the
4 Term Sheet. I move that Bill No. 140450 be
5 amended as proposed.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Second.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. It's been
8 moved and seconded. All those in favor say
9 aye.

10 (Ayes.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any opposed?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And the motion
14 carries. Bill No. 140450 is amended.

15 And the Chair now recognizes
16 Councilmember Jones for a motion on Bill No.
17 140450 as amended.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam
19 Chair.

20 I move that Bill No. 140450 as amended
21 be reported from this Committee with a
22 favorable recommendation; and further move
23 that the Rules of Council be suspended to
24 permit first reading of this bill at our

1 next session of Council.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Second.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. It's been
4 moved and properly seconded that Bill No.
5 140450 as amended be reported from this
6 Committee with a favorable recommendation;
7 and further move that the Rules of Council
8 be suspended as to permit first reading at
9 the next scheduled session of Council.

10 All those in favor say aye.

11 (Ayes.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any opposed?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And the motion
15 carries. And Bill No. 140450 as amended
16 will be reported from this Committee with a
17 favorable recommendation with a request that
18 the Rules of Council be suspended to permit
19 first reading at the next session of
20 Council.

21 And with that, the business of this
22 Committee is concluded. Thank you for
23 attending.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam

1 Chair.

2 - - -

3 (At this time, the Public Meeting of
4 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs adjourned
5 at 2:44 p.m.)

6 - - -

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the
proceedings and evidence noted are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me in the
foregoing matter, and that this is a
correct transcript of the same.

Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of
this transcript does not apply to any
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