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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION AND

4

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, June 7, 2007
9:20 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN, CHAIR

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COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO

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COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.

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COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE

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COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY

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COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

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COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

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BILL 070394 - 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...

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V A R A L L O Incorporated

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Litigation Support Services

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Eleven Penn Center

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1835 Market Street, Suite 600

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

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215.561.2220 215.567.2670

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COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good

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morning. This is the Committee on Parks,

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Recreation and Cultural Affairs. My name

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is W. Wilson Goode, Jr. I am Vice-Chair

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of the Committee. We are awaiting the

7

Chair, but we can get started anyway.

8

A quorum is present. To my

9

left is Councilwoman Marian Tasco. To my

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right is Councilman Jack Kelly. Also

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present is Councilman Frank Rizzo.

12

The Clerk will please read the

13

title of the bill.

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THE CLERK: An ordinance

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authorizing the President of the

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Fairmount Park Commission and the

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Executive Director of Fairmount Park to

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enter into a lease agreement between the

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City of Philadelphia as landlord and the

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Philadelphia Authority for Industrial

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Development as tenant for further

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sublease to Historic Philadelphia, Inc.,

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a certain parcel of land bounded by 6th

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Street, 7th Street, Race Street and the

25

Vine Street Expressway, commonly referred

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2 to as Franklin Square, under certain
3 terms and conditions.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: We have two
5 witnesses I would bring up as one panel.
6 Mark Focht, Fairmount Park Commission,
7 Amy Needle, Historic Philadelphia
8 Incorporated, please come forward, state
9 your name for the record and then proceed
10 with your testimony.

11 MR. FOCHT: Good morning,
12 Councilman Goode and members of the
13 Committee. My name is Mark Focht --

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Excuse me.
15 We've also been -- I'm sorry. Please
16 proceed with your testimony.

17 MR. FOCHT: Good morning. My
18 name is Mark Focht. I'm the Executive
19 Director of the Fairmount Park
20 Commission. I am pleased to appear
21 before you today on behalf of the
22 Fairmount Park Commission in support of
23 Council Bill 070394 allowing the
24 Fairmount Park Commission to enter into a
25 lease with the Philadelphia Authority for

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394
2 Industrial Development, PAID, for a
3 parcel of land commonly referred to as
4 Franklin Square. Under the lease, PAID
5 will sublease Franklin Square to Historic
6 Philadelphia, Inc.

7 A bit of background, under a
8 License Agreement from February 2006, the
9 City of Philadelphia granted Historic
10 Philadelphia, Inc. a license to perform
11 improvements to Franklin Square,
12 including installation of the historic
13 Philadelphia Park Liberty Carousel, a
14 Philadelphia-themed miniature golf
15 course, new park benches, lighting and
16 landscaping and restoration of the
17 restrooms and the historic fountain.

18 As a result of the 2006
19 improvements, historic Franklin Square,
20 one of the five original open space parks
21 planned by William Penn during the late
22 17th century, has been revitalized and
23 reactivated. Located adjacent to
24 Independence Mall, the Constitution
25 Center and Old City, the Square now

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394
2 provides an open and inviting space for
3 outdoor recreation and entertainment,
4 creating a positive pedestrian experience
5 and premier civic and tourist
6 destination.

7 Under the sublease with PAID,
8 Historic Philadelphia, Inc. will manage
9 and maintain the improvements in Franklin
10 Square. Revenues Historic Philadelphia,
11 Inc. receives from its operations in
12 Franklin Square will help pay for
13 maintenance and operation of improvements
14 to the Square. The lease to PAID and
15 further sublease to Historic
16 Philadelphia, Inc. will not impose any
17 financial obligation on the City at any
18 time. Therefore, this lease and
19 operating arrangement is consistent with
20 the Fairmount Park Commission's policy to
21 support development that benefits
22 Fairmount Park and relieves the City of
23 financial obligations.

24 This agreement further
25 implements recommendations in the Park's

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2 Strategic Plan by increasing the quality
3 and quantity of park amenities available
4 to our residents, workers and visitors,
5 while establishing new partnerships to
6 improve, maintain and program our public
7 spaces.

8 I appear before you today to
9 pledge the support of the Fairmount Park
10 Commission and staff for this legislation
11 and respectfully ask that City Council
12 approve Bill 070394.

13 I would also like to thank all
14 of the Commissioners and staff of the
15 Park, the Law Department, the Mayor's
16 Office, Historic Philadelphia, Inc., most
17 particularly, Amy Needle, who we've
18 worked with very closely, for all their
19 hard work on revitalizing Franklin
20 Square. I also ask that the rules be
21 suspended so the ordinance may be passed
22 upon the second reading of Council, and I
23 would be glad to answer any questions.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

25 Ms. Needle, do you have

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394

2 testimony?

3 MS. NEEDLE: Committee members,
4 my name is Amy Needle and I am President
5 and CEO of Historic Philadelphia. I am
6 happy to be here today on behalf of the
7 Board of Directors of Historic
8 Philadelphia in support of Council Bill
9 070394.

10 In 2003, on the heels of the
11 opening of the National Constitution
12 Center, the new Liberty Bell Center and
13 Independence Visitors Center, Governor
14 Rendell asked me to help create and run a
15 new tourism initiative as a part of
16 Historic Philadelphia. The goals were to
17 connect the dots, both historically and
18 geographically, for people in the
19 historic area, to offer some high touch
20 to all the immerging high tech, to keep
21 visitors here longer and to make history
22 fun.

23 The end result was the creation
24 of Once Upon a Nation with
25 Benstitute-trained storytellers, 13 of

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2 them throughout the historic district,
3 adventure tours and performances and the
4 restoration of Franklin Square.

5 For over three years, we worked
6 very closely with Mark and the staff of
7 Fairmount Park to ensure that while we
8 provided entertainment in the Square,
9 like the Philadelphia Park Liberty
10 Carousel and Philly Mini Golf and the
11 playgrounds, we preserved and enhanced
12 the green space as William Penn intended.
13 Before we took any steps, we met with
14 various community organizations,
15 including the Philadelphia Chinatown
16 Development Corporation, Project HOME,
17 Children's Village Childcare Center and
18 many others, whose continual use of the
19 park was integral to our planning and
20 decision-making.

21 With the help of the
22 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City
23 of Philadelphia and several foundations,
24 Historic Philadelphia raised six and a
25 half million dollars to rebuild the

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394
2 Square, and on July 31st of 2006, we
3 reopened Franklin Square. In addition to
4 the amusements that I mentioned earlier,
5 we restored the original fountain,
6 installed new lighting, benches,
7 walkways, bathrooms and provided 24-hour
8 security.

9 In less than a year, Franklin
10 Square has seen over 350,000 people, both
11 visitors and residents. What started off
12 as one element of a much greater tourism
13 initiative has grown into a viable green
14 space and park for the neighboring
15 communities as well.

16 I would like to thank the
17 Fairmount Park Commission and staff, as
18 well as the City Council and City of
19 Philadelphia for allowing us to give this
20 park back to the City.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
23 for your testimony.

24 Are there questions from the
25 Committee for this panel?

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2 Councilwoman Tasco.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

4 Good morning.

5 MS. NEEDLE: Good morning.

6 MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: What rate
8 will they pay under the lease for the use
9 of the land? Is there a monthly income
10 to you?

11 MR. FOCHT: The rent is one
12 dollar a year.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Do you
14 generate any revenue at all? Does
15 Fairmount Park get any revenue at all
16 from this project?

17 MR. FOCHT: From this project,
18 no.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Why?

20 MR. FOCHT: Our partnership
21 agreement from the beginning was the fact
22 that Historic Philadelphia, Inc., as Amy
23 testified, would raise six and a half
24 million dollars to restore the square,
25 which they have done, and would program

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394

2 it, maintain it and operate it for the
3 life of the lease. So they have
4 basically taken what was a fairly rundown
5 public amenity, very few people went
6 there, and they've significantly improved
7 it far beyond what the financial
8 capabilities of Fairmount Park ever would
9 have been to do given our capital budget
10 constraints. So we saw it as a very wise
11 investment of a way to bring a new
12 partner and new capital resources into
13 the park.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And, Amy,
15 how much do you intend to generate in
16 terms of revenue each year?

17 MS. NEEDLE: Well, it's
18 still -- we're still not exactly sure
19 because, of course, we haven't had a full
20 year of operation yet. We just opened
21 July of last year. Any revenue that we
22 receive goes directly back into the
23 maintenance and upkeep of the park,
24 including the 24-hour security.

25 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: But most

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394
2 of the improvements you've done -- I
3 guess all of the improvements you've made
4 have been through contributions?

5 MS. NEEDLE: Yes.

6 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Grants?

7 MS. NEEDLE: Grants,
8 foundations and City and state support.

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Okay.
10 Thank you very much.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Councilman
12 Rizzo.

13 COUNCILMAN RIZZ0: To the
14 Fairmount Park, correct me if I'm wrong,
15 Living Flame Memorial, how are we dealing
16 with that? How is that being protected
17 or funded or maintained?

18 MR. FOCHT: I'll turn it over
19 to Amy in a moment, but from the
20 beginning of our discussions, we
21 required -- and Amy and her organization
22 certainly agreed -- to maintain the
23 Police and Firemen's Memorial and, in
24 fact, they have done some enhancements to
25 it. So I'll turn it over to Amy.

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2 MS. NEEDLE: From the
3 beginning, one of the partners that we
4 started to talk to before we even began
5 the process was the police and
6 firefighters organizations that help
7 maintain the Living Flame Memorial. We
8 always and they always originally told us
9 that they were interested in moving the
10 Memorial to Foglietta Plaza, and then I
11 think when they saw now how many people
12 come to Franklin Square and that it can
13 certainly be a tribute location, they are
14 now interested in working with us to help
15 rebuild a more permanent and professional
16 memorial.

17 So we're continuing to work
18 with them on that, and we will be helping
19 them with fundraising opportunities to
20 maintain the new memorial.

21 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So with your
22 plan, there will be no issue with
23 relocating or we will never have a
24 situation where the Living Flame Memorial
25 will not exist?

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2 to try and do in the future to build that
3 ceremony and to continue to work with
4 both organizations.

5 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Good. It
6 will be good to have the restrooms not
7 locked.

8 MS. NEEDLE: Yes.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Any other
10 questions for these witnesses?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
13 morning.

14 MS. NEEDLE: Good morning.

15 MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We have
17 multiple meetings going on. We have to
18 now be what's called an octopus.

19 Very well. We will now close
20 the hearing and move to the stated
21 meeting.

22 Can I please ask Councilman
23 Goode to please make a motion on Bill No.
24 070394.

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394

2 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No. 070394
3 be reported out of Committee with a
4 favorable recommendation and that the
5 rules of Council be suspended so as to
6 permit first reading at our next Council
7 session.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All those
10 in favor?

11 (Aye.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All those
13 opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Therefore,
16 Bill No. 070394 will be reported out of
17 this Committee with a favorable
18 recommendation and further moved that the
19 rules of Council be suspended so as to
20 permit first reading at the next
21 scheduled session of City Council.

22 This concludes the meeting of
23 the Committee on Parks and Recreation.
24 We want to thank you all for your
25 attendance.

1 6/7/07 - PARKS - BILL 070394
2 (Committee on Parks, Recreation
3 and Cultural Affairs adjourned at 9:35
4 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the

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proceedings, evidence and objections are

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contained fully and accurately in the

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stenographic notes taken by me upon the

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foregoing matter on June 7, 2007, and that

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this is a true and correct transcript of same.

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MICHELE L. MURPHY

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RPR-Notary Public

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