

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

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 28, 2024
2:20 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN RUE LANDAU

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT KENYATTA JOHNSON

BILL: 240422
RESOLUTION: 240392

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Good
3 afternoon. I now note that the
4 hour has come.

5 Clerk, will you please call
6 the roll to take attendance.
7 Members that are in attendance,
8 will you please indicate that you
9 are present when your name is
10 called.

11 THE CLERK: Chair Phillips.

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
13 Present.

14 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair
15 Bass.

16 (No response.)

17 THE CLERK: Councilmember
18 Landau.

19 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
20 Present.

21 THE CLERK: Councilmember
22 Jones.

23 (No response.)

24 THE CLERK: Councilmember
25 Young.

1 (No response.)

2 THE CLERK: Councilmember

3 Thomas.

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: And also

6 joining us is Council President

7 Johnson.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 Present.

10 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank

11 you. A quorum of the Committee is

12 present and this hearing is now

13 called to order. This is the

14 public hearing of the Committee on

15 Parks, Recreation and Cultural

16 Affairs regarding Bill No. 240422

17 and Resolution No. 240392.

18 Clerk, will you please read

19 the title of the bills.

20 THE CLERK: Bill No.

21 240422, an ordinance authorizing

22 the Commissioner of Parks and

23 Recreation, on behalf of the City

24 of Philadelphia, to enter into a

25 multi-year agreement with Cosmic

1 Catering LLC, for the management
2 and operation of the Lloyd Hall
3 Recreation Center Café, all under
4 certain terms and conditions.

5 Bill No. 240392, resolution
6 authorizing the Committee on Parks,
7 Recreation and Cultural Affairs
8 Committee to hold hearings on
9 ensuring Recreation Centers have
10 the full complement of staff needed
11 to represent to respond to the
12 diverse challenges of Philadelphia
13 neighborhoods.

14 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
15 Before I call on the Clerk to call
16 the first panel, please note that
17 Resolution No. 240392 will be held
18 today.

19 Will any of my colleagues
20 like to make any opening comments?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
23 Seeing none, Clerk, will you please
24 call the first panel we have to
25 testify on Bill No. 240422.

1 THE CLERK: Panel 1, Susan
2 Slawson, the Commissioner of the
3 Department of Parks & Recreation.

4 (Witness approached the
5 Witness table.)

6 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
7 you, Commissioner Slawson. Just
8 for the record, can you state your
9 name and your title.

10 COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Good
11 afternoon. Susan Slawson,
12 Commissioner of Parks & Recreation.

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
14 you. Proceed with your testimony.

15 COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Good
16 afternoon, Council President
17 Johnson, Committee Chair Phillips
18 and in her absence Vice-Chair Bass
19 and Councilmember Rue Landau. My
20 name is Susan Slawson and I serve
21 as Commissioner for the Department
22 of Parks & Recreation, PPR, and I'm
23 joined today by Bob Allen, Director
24 of Property and Concessions
25 Management for Parks & Recreation.

1 I'm pleased to appear
2 before you today on behalf of Mayor
3 Parker's Administration and the
4 department in support of City
5 Council Bill No. 240422 introduced
6 by Councilmember Jones. The bill
7 would allow PPR to enter into a
8 multi-year agreement with Cosmic
9 Catering LLC, for the management
10 and operation of Lloyd Hall
11 Recreation Center called Cosmic
12 Café.

13 Cosmic Café is presently
14 operating under a November 2022
15 concession agreement with an
16 initial term of one year with three
17 annual renewal terms. The initial
18 term of the concession agreement
19 will convert to five years if this
20 ordinance is approved and becomes
21 law with the City having an option
22 for a second five-year renewal
23 term.

24 Cosmic Café has
25 responsibility for all utilities,

1 maintenance and repair costs for
2 the café space and provides a
3 guaranteed annual concession fee of
4 \$18,000 plus a percentage of gross
5 revenue ranging from 1.25 percent
6 to 5 percent depending on the
7 source of the revenue.

8 Cosmic Café has been
9 operating at Lloyd Hall since April
10 16, 2011, having won two separate
11 RFP processes and has been a
12 welcomed amenity on the Lloyd Hall
13 Campus. Park users, including the
14 rowing community, the Free Sports
15 League at Lloyd Hall and the
16 hundreds of thousands of
17 recreationalists on Kelly Drive
18 recreation path have had the
19 opportunity to rest and refresh at
20 Cosmic Café.

21 In 2021, Cosmic Café opened
22 the CiderHouse on the terrace at
23 Lloyd Hall. The CiderHouse serves
24 wine, beer and hard cider produced
25 in Pennsylvania. In 2023, Cosmic

1 also introduced a successful
2 seasonal food and beverage garden
3 on the lawn near the Waterworks
4 complex.

5 In terms of community
6 programming Peg Botto founded
7 Cosmic Foundation, which trains
8 people with developmental
9 disabilities in maintenance and
10 food and beverage service
11 positions. Cosmic Café employs
12 several individuals with
13 developmental disabilities.

14 Cosmic Café has been a
15 great partner with Parks &
16 Recreation. It assists with
17 grounds maintenance and public
18 restroom cleaning at Lloyd Hall and
19 has supported Parks & Recreation
20 and other departments with catered
21 meetings and events.

22 Lastly, I would like to
23 mention that Cosmic Catering LLC is
24 a certified 100 percent woman-owned
25 business. Cosmic Catering

1 participation percentage exceeds
2 the participation requirements set
3 forth in the RFP for the
4 concession. For these reasons, we
5 ask that you provide a favorable
6 recommendation of Bill No. 240422
7 and that the rules of Council be
8 suspended to allow first reading at
9 the next session of the City
10 Council. Thank you and we're happy
11 to answer any questions you may
12 have.

13 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
14 you, Commissioner, for your
15 testimony.

16 Are there any questions or
17 comments from members of the
18 Committee for this panel?

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
20 Yes, I have a question.

21 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
22 Council President Johnson is
23 recognized for questions.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
25 Well, first and foremost, Susan,

1 it's good to see you back in the
2 chambers doing the people's
3 business. And so, I just want to
4 thank you for all your hard work
5 and your dedication.

6 Just had a quick question
7 regarding Cosmic Catering. I just
8 want to know do you provide vegan
9 options?

10 COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes,
11 they do provide vegan options, sir.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
13 Okay. That's all I have. Thank
14 you very much. Thank you and keep
15 up the good work.

16 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: The
17 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
18 Landau.

19 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank
20 you for that answer, Commissioner
21 Slawson.

22 I was actually going to
23 thank you for having so many vegan
24 options.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

1 It's hard out here for a vegan.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
3 you. All right. Seeing there's no
4 further questions or any other
5 comments from the panelists?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
8 you for your testimony.

9 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank
10 you very much.

11 There being no further
12 witnesses listed today, I will ask
13 if there's anyone else here in the
14 chambers to testify on Bill No.
15 240422 whose name has not yet been
16 called? If so, please raise your
17 hand.

18 Clerk, will you call the
19 next witness to testify.

20 THE CLERK: Yes. Ms. Peg
21 Botto.

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
23 you. Please approach the witness
24 table.

25 (Witnesses approached the

1 Witness table.)

2 MS. BOTTO: Good afternoon,
3 everyone. My name is Peg Botto. I
4 am the owner and President of
5 Cosmic Café and Catering. I've
6 been there since 2011, and I'm just
7 here to see if we can renew to five
8 years. We are a green company. We
9 love being at Lloyd Hall. We take
10 care of Lloyd Hall like it's part
11 of Cosmic Café.

12 Since the pandemic, we are
13 in charge of the bathrooms and
14 everything because there was no
15 workers and now even on the
16 weekends, so I have staff that do
17 everything. We have disability
18 people. We have all kinds of
19 people that work at the café, and
20 I'd appreciate it if you could pass
21 this for us.

22 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: All
23 right. Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 Are there any questions or

1 comments from members of the
2 Committee for this witness?

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

4 I have a question.

5 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: The
6 Chair recognizes Council President
7 Johnson.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 I just had a question. Well, one,
10 I want to thank you for your
11 business, being a woman-owned
12 business. I just think it's great
13 for you to have this opportunity so
14 I definitely will be supportive.
15 So the million dollar question:
16 What's your best vegan option?

17 MS. BOTTO: I just made
18 a -- I make my own veggie burgers
19 and every week it's different.
20 Today I made artichoke and
21 chickpea.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

23 Okay.

24 MS. BOTTO: There you go.

25 Yeah, we make everything from

1 scratch. I have three other chefs
2 that work with me and we use
3 co-ops, we use a lot of local and
4 fresh, organic foods so we're very
5 sustainable.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
7 Awesome, awesome. I just want to
8 say you're in a very, very
9 prominent location which I think is
10 great. Lloyd Hall is in the
11 backdrop of one of the crown jewels
12 here in the City of Philadelphia,
13 which is the Art Museum. And most
14 importantly, people from all around
15 the country have an opportunity to
16 enjoy themselves on our Schuylkill
17 River Trail.

18 And so, I have half of it
19 as part of the 2nd District
20 Council, so I've been down there on
21 plenty different days. And also
22 even separate as a civilian, I
23 spend time up and down the
24 Schuylkill River Trail with my
25 family. As a matter of fact, I

1 think it's a PHS Pop Up Beer Garden
2 a little bit further down. But now
3 that I know you have vegan options,
4 I'll make sure with the family I'll
5 stop past and say hi to Cosmic
6 Café. So keep up the good work.

7 MS. BOTTO: Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
9 you. And just a quick question.
10 How much revenue has been generated
11 from Cosmic Café in concession
12 fees? Is it under the 2022
13 agreement?

14 MS. BOTTO: What do you
15 mean? I'm sorry.

16 MS. MARTIN: Under the new
17 agreement, we pay annually \$15,800
18 plus 5 percent of revenue from the
19 café sales. And from the
20 CiderHouse sales, we also pay 2
21 percent catering -- I'm sorry, 5
22 percent catering inside the café
23 and 2 percent catering outside of
24 the café. And there's also --

25 MS. BOTTO: We opened a

1 beer garden last year.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: And
3 how much total?

4 MS. MARTIN: Last year --

5 COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Can
6 I --

7 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Yeah.
8 Commissioner Slawson.

9 COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: So
10 on average for the past couple
11 years there's been about \$30,000
12 that we get and the number is just
13 going up.

14 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: And
16 they're going from -- what we
17 asked, they're going from 15
18 percent to 18 percent.

19 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Okay.
20 That's good to know. I just want
21 to keep making sure you guys are
22 thriving over there.

23 All right. So no other
24 questions from the Committee, I
25 wanted to say thank you for your

1 testimony for today. I appreciate
2 you guys. Keep up the great work.

3 COMMISSIONER SLAWSON:

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: This
6 concludes the public hearing on
7 Bill No. 240422. We will now go
8 into a public meeting to consider
9 the action to be taken on this
10 bill.

11 The Chair recognizes
12 Councilmember Landau for a motion
13 on Bill No. 240422.

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank
15 you, Chair.

16 I move that Bill No. 240422
17 be reported from the Committee with
18 a favorable recommendation and
19 further move that the rules of
20 Council be suspended to permit
21 first reading of this bill at the
22 next session of Council.

23 (Duly seconded.)

24 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: It
25 has been moved and properly

1 seconded that Bill No. 240422 be
2 reported from this Committee with a
3 favorable recommendation and
4 further move that the rules of
5 Council be suspended to permit
6 first reading of this bill at the
7 next session of Council.

8 All those in favor of the
9 motion will signify by saying aye.

10 (Aye.)

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Those
12 opposed?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: The
15 ayes have it and the motion
16 carries. Bill No. 240422 will be
17 reported from this Committee with a
18 favorable recommendation with a
19 request that the rules of Council
20 be suspended to permit the first
21 reading at the next session of
22 Council.

23 There being no other
24 business before this Committee
25 today, the public hearing on

1 Resolution No. 240422 -- no -- will
2 stand -- will recess until -- no,
3 240392 will stand in recess until
4 Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
5 at which time we will reconvene in
6 Room 400, City Hall.

7 There being no further
8 questions from members of this
9 Committee and no other witnesses to
10 testify, this concludes the
11 business before the Committee on
12 Parks, Recreation and Cultural
13 Affairs today. Thank you all very
14 much for your attendance.

15 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank
16 you.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
18 You're welcome.

19 (Committee on Parks,
20 Recreation & Cultural Affairs
21 concluded at 2:35 p.m.)
22
23
24
25

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

2 I, hereby certify that the proceedings
3 and evidence noted are contained fully and
4 accurately in the stenographic notes taken by
5 me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a
6 correct transcript of the same.
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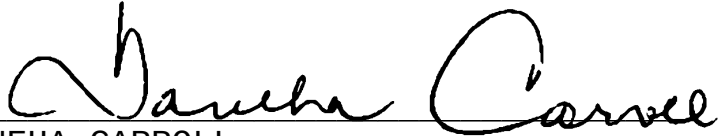
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18 (The foregoing certification of this
19 transcript does not apply to any reproduction
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21 direct control and/or supervision of the
22 certifying reporter.)

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TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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