

# City of Philadelphia



## Council of the City of Philadelphia Office of the Chief Clerk Room 402, City Hall Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 250881)

### RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on Commerce & Economic Development to hold hearings on the disposition policy regarding the Polish American Cultural Center Museum located at 308 Walnut Street.

WHEREAS, The Polish American Cultural Center project began with a proposal by Philadelphia City Council members on June 11, 1987, with the introduction of Bill # 1339 which approved the acquisition and redevelopment of 308 Walnut Street to support the relocation of the Polish American Cultural Center and Social Services offices from the Fairmount section of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of this Ordinance was to assist with the opening of a new Polish American Museum Exhibit Hall to promote Philadelphia and welcome tourists to our City from around the world; and

WHEREAS, With the full support of the Mayor and City Council, of the time, the expectation was that this acquisition and renovation would create a permanent location for the Polish American Cultural Center in the historic area of Philadelphia; and

Excerpts from Bill # 1339 follow:

“WHEREAS, Authorizing the Managing Director, on behalf of the City, to enter into an agreement with the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia providing for the Authority’s assistance to a proposed project consisting of the acquisition and renovation of a property known as 308 Walnut Street and for certain payments to be made to the Authority by the City, under certain prescribed conditions, in consideration of the Authority's providing such assistance, and

WHEREAS, The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia (the "Authority") has been requested by the City of Philadelphia (the "City") and a community organization known as the Polish American Cultural Center to assist in the acquisition and renovation of an existing building located at 308 Walnut street in the City's historic district so that the building may be used as a Polish-American museum and cultural exhibition hall, including meeting places, an education

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## *RESOLUTION NO. 250881 continued*

center, and offices for non-profit service organizations and agencies serving the needs of the City's Polish and Slavic communities as well as other groups in need of the services offered by such organizations and agencies; and,

WHEREAS, The Authority is willing to undertake a project (the "Project") consisting of (a) the Authority's 2 acquisition of 308 Walnut street, (b) renovations thereto for the purposes above-described (collectively, the "Property"), and (c) the sale of the Property from the Authority to an entity nominated by the sponsors of the Project and approved by the Authority and the City pursuant to the terms of an installment sale agreement (the "Installment Sale Agreement"), provided that the City will enter into an agreement (the "Contract") with the Authority providing for the City's financial assistance to the Authority, as necessary, in the event that payments received by the Authority under the Installment Sale Agreement shall at any time be insufficient to satisfy Authority indebtedness incurred for the purpose of providing the described assistance to the Project; and,"

WHEREAS, The directors and representatives of the Polish American Cultural Center have requested a hearing to discuss the execution of Bill # 1339 and the recent cancellation of their lease and removal from the property located at 308 Walnut Street; and

WHEREAS, The directors and representatives of the Polish American Cultural Center contend that "The time period between 1989 and 2019, the unfortunate mismanagement and miscommunication by City of Philadelphia employees at the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority have caused all of this to happen. The leadership of the Polish American Cultural Center received no knowledge of what exactly happened over all those years as the Social Service agency, serving constituents in Philadelphia since 1908, the Polish American Museum Exhibit Hall, and other related services of the Cultural Center have been assisting constituents as well as welcoming many tourists, school groups, visitors, and other groups from all over the world since the opening in 1989"; and

WHEREAS, The directors and representatives of the Polish American Cultural Center also contend that "When this matter was first discovered in 2019 after hearing the disturbing news of the deed holder conflict, I requested a swift face-to-face meeting with all parties involved with the HUD GRANT so we could review all the paperwork and come up with the proper solution that would honor the original proposed commitments Philadelphia elected officials made to the Polish American community in 1987 and 1988. I wanted to respect the intentions of the people that requested proposed and committed to fund the project"; and

WHEREAS, The directors and representatives of the Polish American Cultural Center also contend that "Unfortunately, since we requested the deed over the last 7 years, staff at the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority has not allowed for a resolution, nor assisted with any possibilities to resolve this matter in the most positive and efficient way"; and

WHEREAS, Given these unsettled issues, Councilmember Squilla requests the scheduling of a hearing to bring to light the circumstances surrounding the removal of the Polish American

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Cultural Center Museum from the property located at 308 Walnut Street which they called home since 1989; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Authorizes the Committee on Commerce & Economic Development to hold hearings on the disposition policy regarding the Polish American Cultural Center Museum located at 308 Walnut Street.

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*RESOLUTION NO. 250881 continued*

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the ninth day of October, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Squilla

Sponsored by: