



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RESOLUTION NO. 220857

Introduced October 20, 2022

Councilmember Bass

RESOLUTION

Urging Drexel University, as the recipient of the Atwater Kent Collection to ensure adequate stewardship of the collection and protect the interest of donors, art lovers, and the residents of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has a responsibility to inform itself, and the public, as best as it is practicably possible, concerning the disposition of City assets and to protect the public's interest in those assets; and

WHEREAS, Following the gift to the City by Atwater Kent of the building located at 15 S. 15th St., this Council in 1938 enacted an ordinance establishing the Atwater Kent Museum (the "Museum") to display historical artifacts owned by the City in Center City and to make those artifacts available to the City; and

WHEREAS, The Transfer Agreement establishes an Oversight Committee which does not include any representative of the Philadelphia organizations which were originally on the Board of the Atwater Kent or those which made important gifts to the Atwater Kent Collection; and

WHEREAS, This Collection which was committed to Drexel's care for the public good should be protected and made available to the public. Further Council needs to understand why this administration attempted to transfer millions of dollars in City property to a private institution without this Council's express approval; and

WHEREAS, The Transfer Agreement should be amended to require that any object to be deaccessioned shall first be offered free of charge to the nonprofit institution which donated the object to the Atwater Kent Museum; and

WHEREAS, The Transfer Agreement should be amended to require Drexel to provide a specific amount of annual funding sufficient to maintain the Collection and engage in the activities contemplated by the Transfer Agreement; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 220857 continued

WHEREAS, The Transfer Agreement should be amended to require that if an object is not displayed in public in a museum for more than 5 years that any such object shall be offered to the nonprofit institution which donated the object to the Atwater Kent Museum; and

WHEREAS, The Transfer Agreement should be amended to prohibit the use or display of the Collection in the private residence or office of any Drexel trustee, employee, faculty, staff member, volunteer, or student; and

WHEREAS, The Transfer Agreement should be amended to require the Oversight Committee and Drexel to provide a report on an annual basis to each member of this Council detailing the City funds spent on the Collection, the loans of any object from the Collection, a detailed accounting of what funds Drexel has spent on the Collection that did not come from the City or third parties, any objects deaccessioned and the entity receiving them, and the number of people other than Drexel University staff and students who viewed the Collection at Drexel University and a copy of the annual report shall be posted along with the minutes of the Oversight Committee on the Atwater Kent website at the same time as the annual report is delivered to this Council; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges Drexel University, as the recipient of the Atwater Kent Collection to ensure adequate stewardship of the collection and protect the interest of donors, art lovers, and the residents of Philadelphia.