City of Philadelphia

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

Meeting Agenda

Monday, November 16, 2026

10:00 AM

Room 400, City Hall

Committee on Legislative Oversight

12 Items for Discussion

260737 Resolution Authorizing the Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold hearings investigating the announced closure of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University's public museum, its consequences for Philadelphia, and options to preserve public access and the institution's scientific and educational mission and authorizing the issuance of subpoenas to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

Attachments: Signature26073700

City of Philadelphia

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

(Resolution No. 260737)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold hearings investigating the announced closure of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University's public museum, its consequences for Philadelphia, and options to preserve public access and the institution's scientific and educational mission and authorizing the issuance of subpoenas to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

WHEREAS, Founded in 1812, the Academy of Natural Sciences opened its museum to the public in 1828 and became affiliated with Drexel University in 2011, connecting generations of Philadelphians with natural history and scientific discovery; and
WHEREAS, On September 1, 2026, Academy and Drexel leadership announced that the museum would close effective September 30th, citing changed visitation patterns and rising operating costs, while continuing the Academy's research and stewardship of more than 19 million specimens and other scientific resources; and

WHEREAS, Leadership also announced ongoing discussions with the offices of the Governor and Mayor, with David L. Cohen serving as a facilitator designated by the Governor, concerning the Academy's future and continued presence in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The loss of regular museum access warrants examination of the effects on schoolchildren, families, employees, and scientific education, and of the financial and governance decisions underlying the closure; and

WHEREAS, Institutions like the Academy of Natural Sciences are part of the cultural fabric of the City, and keeping them fully funded and operational represents the City's commitment to cultural enrichment and the pursuit of scientific advancement; and

WHEREAS**,** The Academy's Patrick Center for Environmental Research, founded in 1947 by Dr. Ruth Patrick, whose work helped shape the Clean Water Act, has for nearly eighty years monitored pollutants, contaminants, and water quality in the Delaware River watershed, the source of Philadelphia's drinking water, working with government agencies to understand how the health of our waterways and the health of our residents are connected; and

WHEREAS, The closure of the museum will have an impact on all Philadelphians, but will especially affect Fifth District constituents in Center City for whom the museum is a fixture of the neighborhood and a cherished part of the Logan Square community; and

WHEREAS, City Council seeks to establish a public record of alternatives, including partnerships, fundraising, phased operations, and other arrangements that could sustain public access while protecting collections and research; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Legislative Oversight is hereby authorized to hold hearings investigating the announced closure of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University's public museum and options to preserve its public, educational, and scientific contributions to Philadelphia, and authorizing the issuance of subpoenas to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the seventeenth day of September, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Young

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Young Ahmad, Jones, Lozada, Brooks, Harrity, O'Rourke and Squilla