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Title: Authorizing the Commission on Parks and Recreation to establish Regional Parks and Recreation Advisory Committees, and providing for the powers and responsibilities, and composition, of said Committees; all under certain terms and conditions.

Sponsors: Councilmember Clarke, Councilmember Reynolds Brown, Councilmember Jones

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
6/4/2009	0	CITY COUNCIL	Referred		
6/4/2009	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced	Pass	

Authorizing the Commission on Parks and Recreation to establish Regional Parks and Recreation Advisory Committees, and providing for the powers and responsibilities, and composition, of said Committees; all under certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, On June 19, 2008, Council adopted Resolution No. 080181 proposing an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter (“the Charter Amendment”); and

WHEREAS, On November 4, 2008, the voters of Philadelphia approved the Charter Amendment; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the Charter Amendment, effective July 1, 2009, a new unified Department of Parks and Recreation will be established; the Fairmount Park Commission will cease to exist; and a Commission on Parks and Recreation will be created, with new and substantial responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, The Charter Amendment required that the Council President, no later than February 1, 2009, “by public notice, solicit applicants to serve on the Commission”; that “[t]he application period shall be open for no less than thirty days, after which the Council shall hold a public hearing on the proposed nominations”; and that “[n]o later than ninety days after the close of applications, the Council, by resolution, shall forward to the Mayor no fewer than 18 and no more than 25 nominations”; and

WHEREAS, On January 28, 2009, Mayor Nutter and members of City Council held a press conference announcing the beginning of the application process; and

WHEREAS, On January 29 and 30, 2009, notice was published in six newspapers which solicited applications for the Commission; stated that the deadline to apply was March 9, 2009; and directed applicants to an Application Form available at www.phila.gov, www.phila.gov/citycouncil, www.phila.gov/recreation, www.fairmountpark.org, at the Chief Clerk’s Office (Room 402 City Hall), and at Philadelphia libraries, recreation centers, and Fairmount Park facilities; and

WHEREAS, In response to this and other announcements, more than 200 individuals submitted detailed applications; and

WHEREAS, On January 29, 2009, Council adopted Resolution No. 090057 authorizing Council's standing Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to hold the public hearing required by the Charter Amendment; and

WHEREAS, On March 18, March 19, March 24, and March 26, 2009, the Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs held public hearings at which 149 applicants presented their credentials; and

WHEREAS, The universal sentiment of all in attendance at those hearings was that the caliber of the applicants was outstanding, and the desire to serve deeply-held; and

WHEREAS, It is the belief of Council that the energy, passion, intelligence, experience, and sheer breadth of talent presented at the public hearings (and in the applications of those who were unable to testify) must be marshaled on behalf of the City's parks and recreation system;

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(a) The Commission on Parks and Recreation ("the Commission") is hereby authorized to establish no later than 30 days after the effective date of this ordinance, no fewer than five Regional Parks and Recreation Advisory Committees ("Advisory Committees"), each of which shall serve a defined geographical area of the City.

(b) Subject to the requirement in Section 1(a), the number of Advisory Committees and the boundaries of each Advisory Committee shall be determined, and may from time to time be changed, by the Commission in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Commissioner. To the extent possible, such boundaries should align with the operations of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

SECTION 2. COMPOSITION OF REGIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(a) Each Regional Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee shall consist of no fewer than nine and no more than fifteen members, who shall be appointed by the Commission after consultation with the Parks and Recreation Commissioner.

(b) Appointees shall have demonstrated experience or skills relevant to the powers and duties of the Commission. In making the appointments, the Commission shall give preference to those persons who applied to serve on that Commission but were not appointed by the Mayor. The Commission shall consult the applications submitted by those applicants, any testimony submitted by such applicants at the public hearing, and any letters of recommendation, all of which shall be kept on file in the Office of the Chief Clerk of Council and made available in electronic format to Commission members.

(c) In making its appointments, the Commission shall give consideration to ensuring that the Advisory Committees reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity within the City.

(d) Advisory Committee members shall serve a term of four years and until their successors are appointed. Vacancies occurring during a term shall be filled in the same manner that initial appointments are made.

SECTION 3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Each Regional Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities with respect to its area of the City:

(a) To advise and support the Commission in the fulfillment of its responsibilities as specified in the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter and reproduced herein:

Section 5-601. Commission on Parks and Recreation

(a) The Commission, after receiving public comment, shall from time to time adopt standards and guidelines relating to City park and recreation land and facilities, including standards and guidelines relating to land use; preservation of green space; watershed management; sustainability; and the conveyance and acquisition of park and recreation land or facilities, including criteria for the assessment and evaluation of proposed conveyances or acquisitions. The Parks and Recreation Commissioner and all other City officials shall give substantial weight to the standards and guidelines adopted by the Commission when taking or considering any official action relating to the City's park or recreation land or facilities.

(b) The Commission shall assist and advise the Parks and Recreation Commissioner and such private organizations as the Commission may choose, to promote, support and enhance the image of the Fairmount Park System, other City parks, and City recreation facilities; and to expand and diversify the funding and resources for operation and capital expenditures in and for park and recreation facilities.

(c) The Commission shall convene public meetings at least quarterly, and shall provide, at each public meeting, opportunity for public comment concerning any matter within the jurisdiction of the Commission.

(b) To advise the Parks and Recreation Commissioner in the fulfillment of his or her responsibilities;

(c) To coordinate and consult with existing recreation and park advisory councils; and

(d) To carry out any additional responsibilities that may from time to time be vested in one or more Committees by the Commission or the Parks and Recreation Commissioner.

SECTION 4. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately.