

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Honoring the Chestnut Hill Conservancy/Chestnut Hill Historical Society on the Occasion of its 50th Anniversary.

WHEREAS, The Chestnut Hill Historical Society, renamed the “Chestnut Hill Conservancy” in 2017, is dedicated to preserving the historical, architectural, and cultural resources and the open spaces that define the character of Chestnut Hill and its environs; and

WHEREAS, The Chestnut Hill Historical Society was incorporated in February 1967 after the Committee for the Preservation of Historic Buildings in Chestnut Hill was organized in the prior year in response to proposed drastic alterations to the neglected VFW Building on Germantown Avenue. Shirley Hanson was the Historical Society’s Founding Director. The goal of the Historical Society was to preserve Chestnut Hill’s distinctive characteristics so as to retain its essence and ensure its future vitality. It was renamed the “Chestnut Hill Conservancy” in 2017; and

WHEREAS, The Chestnut Hill Conservancy has proactively sought to preserve and protect Chestnut Hill’s historic architecture. In 1985, the National Park Service recognized Chestnut Hill as a National Historic District and added it to the prestigious National Register of Historic Places. Such distinction and recognition of Chestnut Hill’s historical significance and architectural heritage may not have been possible had the Conservancy not first conducted research and produced a detailed inventory of virtually every building in Chestnut Hill. Today, 2,700 buildings are recognized as one of the nation’s largest National Historic Districts; and

WHEREAS, In partnership with the Friends of the Wissahickon, the Chestnut Hill Conservancy sponsors an Easement Program which was founded in 1990. The program allows owners of historic structures to donate façade easements to preserve and protect them from inappropriate alterations or additions. Property owners can also donate potential development rights to the Conservancy as a means of preventing future development or subdivision. Today, the Program manages more than 35 easements, valued at over \$10 million, that protect more than 130 acres of open space and 13 historic façades; and

WHEREAS, The Chestnut Hill Conservancy’s archives detail the history of Chestnut Hill from the 1680s to the present day. More than 21,000 items are in its collection, including architectural drawings, more than 12,000 photographs, maps from the 1870s through the 1930s, prints, drawings, deeds, diaries, genealogical materials, books, taped and transcribed oral histories, and selected objects. The collection is open to the public as a resource for education and research; and

WHEREAS, The Conservancy’s Resource Center advises homeowners on the care of their property, from maintenance to restoration to adaptive reuse. The Conservancy also coordinates events and programs throughout the year. “Ask the Experts,” “Open Archives,” the “Chestnut Hill Explorers Club” for children, the “Discovering Chestnut Hill” tours, and “The Great Houses Tour,” are just examples of programs and events hosted by the Conservancy that make life in Chestnut Hill so vibrant; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia owes the Chestnut Hill Conservancy a debt of gratitude for its significant contributions to the preservation, protection, and vitality of Chestnut Hill for the past 50 years. Chestnut Hill is one of the most beautiful and historic communities in the City and the Nation, and the Chestnut Hill Conservancy continues to do excellent work to ensure that the treasures within Chestnut Hill will remain for the enjoyment of future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and honor the Chestnut Hill Conservancy/Chestnut Hill Historical Society on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That Engrossed copies of this resolution be presented to the Chestnut Hill Conservancy/Chestnut Hill Historical Society and it's founding director, Shirley Hanson, evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.