Legislation Text

File #: 210811, **Version:** 0

Recognizing the 7th Ward Tribute, an artistic installation project paying homage to the remarkable Black history of Philadelphia's 7th Ward, for its dedication to preserving Black history and culture in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, At the end of the 19th century, Philadelphia's 7th Ward was the heart of Philadelphia's growing Black and immigrant communities. The ward, which was bounded by Spruce and South streets and extending from 7th Street to the Schuylkill River, had the highest number of Black residents in the City; and

WHEREAS, In 1896, W.E.B. Du Bois was invited to conduct a study of the Black population in the Seventh Ward. In 1899, the University of Pennsylvania published his groundbreaking book, *The Philadelphia Negro*, which described the area as the heart of Philadelphia's Black community; and

WHEREAS, This year, the Philadelphia City Archives, Little Giant Creative, and Mural Arts Philadelphia have received funding from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to pay homage to the remarkable Black history of the 7th Ward. This project will be called the 7th Ward Tribute and will have Black artists and historians create a series of creative homages throughout Philadelphia's historical 7th Ward to tell a place-based story of the neighborhood, communities, and people; and

WHEREAS, The 7th Ward Tribute will contextualize the ward's deeply-rooted Black history and profound contributions from communities often marginalized in history, underscoring that an inclusive future is possible only when we tell the full story of our past; and

WHEREAS, A youth curriculum informed by the research of the 7th Ward's vibrant history will also be developed to capture an accurate account of an important chapter in Philadelphia's Black history; and

WHEREAS, The 7th Ward Tribute will seek to resurrect history, not just unearth it. In order to foster lasting equity and anti-racism in cities, it is important to understand that papered-over histories repeat themselves. The history of the historic 7th Ward must be celebrated and permanently replace the existing paradigm of erasure and denial; and

WHEREAS, This unique effort coincides with another groundbreaking project to memorialize and honor Philadelphia's Black history. Earlier this year, Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson partnered with the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and the South of South Neighborhood Association (SOSNA) to address a spike in demolition in Philadelphia's 30th Ward, just south of the historic 7th Ward, on a stretch of Christian Street dubbed Black Doctors Row. The Preservation Alliance and SOSNA commissioned a nomination for Black Doctors Row to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Meanwhile, City Council passed legislation from Councilmember Johnson to impose a temporary demolition moratorium and to modify zoning regulations to reduce incentives to demolish; and

WHEREAS, Given the profound importance of Philadelphia's Black history, and its longstanding under-recognition and under-appreciation, the 7th Ward Tribute is deserving of broad recognition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes the 7th Ward Tribute, an artistic installation project paying homage to the profound Black history of the 7th Ward, for its dedication to preserving Black history and culture in Philadelphia.

powered by Legistar™