

**Testimony of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce on
City Council Bill 070462**

June 5, 2007

Good morning Chairman Clarke and Chairwoman Reynolds Brown and members of the Committees on Public Property and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. For the record I am Denise H. Earley and I am here today on behalf of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce (GPCC) to offer support for City Council Bill 070462, creating a master ground lease and sublease which would bring the Barnes Foundation one step closer to Philadelphia.

The GPCC has always been supportive of the effort to move the Barnes Foundation art collection to Philadelphia. We believe that this is a regional issue and will allow the collection to be viewed by many more individuals than present conditions allow.

Dr. Barnes wanted art to inspire the common man. This relocation of the collection will provide better access to the common man. Dr. Barnes was adamant that, “plain people, this is, men and women who gain their livelihood by daily toil...shall have free access to the art gallery.” The current location has limited access and limited space. The limited space restricts access to 1,200 visitors per week to experience one of the finest art collections in the world. Barnes’ art is a world treasure, and Barnes’ vision of using art to bring people together is not being truly fulfilled at its current location.

Having the Barnes join such treasured company as the Academy of Natural Sciences, The Franklin Institute, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, The Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Rodin Museum along the Parkway would truly place our City among the great art venues worldwide.

The proposed site on the Parkway can be developed in a way to protect the integrity of the collection as well as the manner in which Dr. Barnes wanted it displayed to the public. His treasure can be situated in a way that will make it a truly educational experience for all of our citizens. In addition, the move will have a positive impact on tourism in Philadelphia.

The relocation of the Barnes Foundation collection is a win-win situation for all parties. Such a move will raise the profile of the Foundation and expose it to a wider audience, as well as enhance the institutions and businesses along the Parkway.

Again, the GPCC supports City Council Bill 070462.

Thank you for this opportunity.