Annual Meeting Report by
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The spotlight was on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and its institutions in 2012. It was a very exciting year, with the Barnes Foundation officially opening on the Parkway to much fanfare, the Rodin Museum reopening after extensive renovations, the Franklin Institute beginning construction on their 53,000 square foot addition, and Sister Cities Park becoming an instant success as an active public space.

Planning
In the area of planning, the Parkway Council’s year began with a successful transition of the study of targeted dangerous intersections (25th Street/Pennsylvania Ave./Kelly Drive/Fairmount Ave.) to the City administration for further study, and (hopefully) physical improvements. Parsons Brinckerhoff (the same consultant firm we engaged) is continuing the work for the City.

Moving forward with an idea that has been in the formative stages for two years, the Parkway Council applied for and obtained a $75,000 William Penn Foundation grant for the initial two years of planning for the Parkway Centennial, which will be celebrated in 2017-2018. The Council created and distributed a Request for Proposals, and ultimately selected Devine and Partners as our Centennial planning consultants, for Fall 2012-2014.

Marketing
Our strides in the area of marketing were significant in 2012 – online, in print, and otherwise. Visits to the Parkway Museums District (PMD) website increased by 110% over the same time period in 2011, and our site now appears in the top five results on Google searches for “Ben Franklin Parkway” and “museums in Philadelphia.” The fan base for our Facebook page increased an astounding 600% in the past year.

In the area of print marketing, the PMD brochure, promoting all of our destinations in a single publication, was redesigned, printed and broadly distributed through institutions, hotels, and key visitor locations. Several coupons (available online and in print) achieved excellent redemption results. The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau’s Official Visitors Guide for the Spring and Summer once again contained a PMD print ad. The big change this year was participating in the internationally distributed June 2012 USAirways Magazine. A beautiful 2-page PMD spread was included in the 78 page Philadelphia insert, focused on the city as an outstanding arts destination. Sharing the cost with nine Parkway partners made our participation possible.

The Parkway Council worked with the Philadelphia Visitors Channel this past year to create a video, profiling the PMD and its attractions, to be shown in over 15,000 local hotel rooms. The individual institutions were given the option to have a video produced and included at a reduced cost.
Parkway Council leaders met with 6ABC leadership regarding possible partnerships and marketing ideas. This resulted in Parkway-themed sound bites during Fall 2012 Parkway parades, and will likely lead to a partnership related to the Parkway Centennial.

The Council continued to initiated no-cost ways to market the PMD, including: editing travel forum articles and submitting reviews of Parkway destinations on tripadvisor.com, providing museum information for City press releases regarding major events on the Parkway, as well as the aforementioned parade blurbs.

**Relationship Building**

We planned and hosted our annual “State of the Parkway” board meeting in March, including funders, leaders of neighborhood organizations, and City administration. Upcoming projects and priorities for the Parkway Council, its member organizations, and the neighborhood groups were shared, and common interests were discussed. This year, we also included the following speakers: Alan Greenberger, Mike DiBerardinis, Ahmad Corbitt, and Steve Buckley.

We continued to work closely with the outgoing and new leadership of Logan Square Neighborhood Association, partnering on common issues such as the homeless presence, zoning, and building reuse issues.

**Advocacy**

Early this year, Parkway Council members met with senior level City administration, including Mayor Nutter, regarding the impact of public feedings on the Parkway.

The organization served as Parkway advocate as well, regarding:

- Vine Street/676 lids project
- Family Court Building reuse
- Made in America concert impact

In addition, the Parkway Council’s Executive Director served as the Parkway representative on the City’s Combined Outreach committee, as well as the steering committee for Philadelphia 2035’s Central District planning process, and GPTMC’s collaborative “With Art, Philadelphia” marketing and public relations group.

**Administrative/Membership**

Longtime Parkway Council member and former Board President Happy Fernandez stepped down from her position as Moore College of Art and Design’s President, and Moore’s new leader, Cecelia Fitzgibbon, joined the Parkway Council. Brent Martin also joined the board as the new General Manager of the Four Seasons Philadelphia, replacing Harry Gorstayn.

The Parkway Council Board expanded by five members, mid-year 2012. The new members include: Rachel Lithgow, Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation, Daniel Schidlow, Drexel University College of Medicine, Ahmad Corbitt, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Karen Young, Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center, and Patti Shwayder, Aimco.

The coming year will be an exciting one, as we jump head first into the formal planning phase of the Parkway Centennial. At the same time, we will continue to pursue new marketing, advocacy, and funding opportunities, as well as represent the members of the Parkway Council in any and all relevant forums.