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City Officials, Nonprofit Leaders Celebrate Relighting of Boathouse Row with Street Festival and Light Show

PHILADELPHIA – September 24, 2016 – Today Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, in partnership with Fairmount Park Conservancy and The Schuylkill Navy, will celebrate Fairmount Park and the new lighting installation on Boathouse Row with “Fairmount Park in a New Light” – a street festival on Martin Luther King Drive that will be capped off with a dazzling display of the new lighting system’s capabilities at dusk.

The lights that trim the houses on Boathouse Row were first installed in 1979 and then replaced in 2005 with LEDs that promised to look brighter, last longer, use less energy, and work in conjunction with a computer system that could change their color. About halfway through the expected 20-year lifespan of the system, various failures occurred to the lights, power supplies, and controller – leaving dark gaps. Since parts from the original system are no longer available due to changes in technology, a full replacement of the components was necessary. When philanthropist Joanna McNeil Lewis learned that the city did not have the funds in place to tackle the project, she offered her support to make the project a reality. Funds to replace the lights and underwrite the festival were provided by The Joanna McNeil Trust.

“The city is grateful to Jody Lewis and others like her who dedicate their time and resources to helping us provide Philadelphia with some of the most beautiful urban parks in the world,” said **Mayor Jim Kenney**.

Joanna (Jody) McNeil Lewis is a philanthropist who has contributed her time, energy and resources to many of Philadelphia’s most important institutions. She serves on the Board of

Directors of the Barra Foundation and the Philadelphia Zoo, where she spearheaded the fundraising for the McNeil Avian Center. As President and CEO and Chair of the Board of the Academy of Music, she steered the organization from 2007 until 2013, a time which included financial difficulties during the recession and the Philadelphia Orchestra's noted bankruptcy filing in 2011.

“As a newcomer to Philadelphia, I am struck by how much Philadelphians come together for their parks,” said **Rick Magder, Executive Director of Fairmount Park Conservancy**. “It is not every city in which a philanthropic citizen, a city agency, and a nonprofit organization can quickly collaborate on a capital project that increases everyone’s enjoyment of an iconic public space.”

Commodore Paul Horvat said, “On behalf of the ten rowing clubs on Boathouse Row, we are thrilled that our lights look better than ever, and we hope that seeing them reminds everyone to get out and enjoy Philly’s ‘hidden river,’ the Schuylkill.”

Fairmount Park in a New Light runs from 5 – 10 pm on Saturday, September 24 along Martin Luther King Drive at the Fairmount Dam Fish Ladder.

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) advances the prosperity of the city and the progress of her people through intentional and sustained stewardship of nearly 10,200 acres of public land and waterways as well as through hundreds of safe, stimulating recreation, environmental and cultural centers. PPR promotes the well-being and growth of the city’s residents by connecting them to the natural world around them, to each other and to fun, physical and social opportunities. PPR is responsible for the upkeep of historically significant Philadelphia events and specialty venues, and works collaboratively with communities and organizations in leading capital projects and the introduction of inventive programming. To learn more about Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, visit us at www.phila.gov/parksandrec, and follow @philaparkandrec on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Tumblr.

Fairmount Park Conservancy exists to champion Philadelphia’s parks. Our mission is to work as a collaborative partner to lead and support efforts that preserve and improve the parks and recreation system in order to enhance the quality of life and stimulate economic development of

the Greater Philadelphia Region. We fulfill our mission by leading capital projects and historic preservation efforts, fostering neighborhood park stewardship, attracting and leveraging resources for the parks, and developing innovative programs throughout the 10,200 acres that include Fairmount Park and more than 100 neighborhood parks around the city. The Philadelphia park system is one of the largest urban park systems in the world and includes some of the region's most famous attractions. For more information, please visit myphillypark.org, join us at facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy, and follow us on Instagram and Twitter @myphillypark.

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