

FRIENDS of the BARNES FOUNDATION

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TODAY: FRIENDS OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION WILL APPEAL TO DRPA COMMISSIONERS TO ASK THEM TO RESCIND \$500,000 FOR BARNES MOVE PROJECT

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(MERION STATION, May 20) Today, representatives of Friends of the Barnes Foundation will appear before the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) Commissioners to urge reconsideration of the DRPA's \$500,000 pledge toward the planned dismantling and removal of the Barnes Foundation art collection from its internationally-revered home in Merion, Pennsylvania to a tourism venue five miles away in Philadelphia. The project has generated unprecedented international criticism both for its planned destruction of an incomparable aesthetic experience as well as its murky political origins.

The request stems from the absence of evidence that the Philadelphia Barnes venture meets the DRPA's own guidelines for economic development projects. In addition, circumstances have changed significantly from when the DRPA pledged the funds in 2003, including the Barnes' documented eligibility as a National Historic Landmark, which opens up new possibilities for fundraising, and the 125% increase in visitation approved by Lower Merion Township.

The current economic crisis, escalating construction costs, and the financial distress throughout the cultural community call into question whether the move is financially viable in the short term and whether the project will be a continuing drain on the region's stressed financial resources.

Friends of the Barnes Foundation supports the plan to keep the Barnes intact in Merion with a link to the site to Philadelphia via a shuttle bus from the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Congressman for the 6th District, Jim Gerlach, a longtime supporter of preservation of the Barnes Merion site, will call in to the DRPA Commissioners meeting from Washington, D.C.

A Statement will be given to the Commissioners prepared by Rutgers University Professor of Economics Matityahu Marcus, Ph.D. about the considerations necessary for an objective evaluation by the DRPA of the regional economic impact of Barnes project. It states that “There is no available evidence that established economic criteria have been employed to assess the project’s desirability by any of the parties involved. This Statement focuses on the importance of the DRPA applying its own Guidelines on the Economic Impact of the move before awarding the \$500,000 DRPA grant for the Barnes project.”

For more information, go to www.barnesfriends.org