



# City of Pittsburgh

510 City-County Building  
414 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

## Text File

**Introduced:** 9/16/2008

**Bill No:** 2008-0739, **Version:** 1

**Committee:** City Council

**Status:** Adopted

**WHEREAS**, Henry Clay Frick built the **William Penn Hotel**, in 1916, at the cost of six million dollars, to bring a “world class” hotel to Pittsburgh - and one that would rival the grand hotels of Europe; and

**WHEREAS**, the **William Penn** was designed by Janssen and Abbott, one of the finest architectural teams of the period and was considered the most modern hotel of its time and as the *Pittsburgh Gazette Times* reported “there is scarcely a feature of this huge structure ...that is not a product of Pittsburgh”; crowds marveled at the opulent Palm Court Lobby with its walnut pillars, floors of green Italian marble and magnificent ceiling, reputedly copied from the Palace at Fontainebleau; the rooms were furnished with reproductions of the Louis XVI period, in walnut, mahogany or white enamel, by the M.J. Pickering Company of Pittsburgh; each piece of furniture and drapery panel and every one of the sixty-three thousand pieces of silver bore the William Penn crest and the Urban Room, the striking Art Deco style grand ballroom, was designed by and named for Joseph Urban, a set designer for the Ziegfield Follies, and features black Carrara glass walls and a hand painted “Tree of Life” ceiling mural; and

**WHEREAS**, when it was first built, the **William Penn** was a self-contained city in miniature, including private quarters for staff; a separate 'bachelors floor' with a private sitting room and library; a complete printing facility; a bakery; a barbershop; a manicure parlor; a drug store; a billiards room and the staff included a 'butcher', a 'baker' and a 'candlestick maker' or silversmith and a locksmith; and

**WHEREAS**, by the late 1930s, the **William Penn** had emerged not only as a convention facility, but as the center for almost all business and social activity in Pittsburgh; legend claims that more deals were made in the Continental Bar than in any corporate office in the city; and

**WHEREAS**, the **William Penn** has hosted many entertainers and celebrities, including Don Bestor and Ramona; Orrin Tucker with Wee Bonnie Baker; Max Adkins; Earl Truxell; Jimmy Joy; Billy Catizone and His Men of Music; Kay Kaiser; the Nick Lomakin Trio; Jack Pettis; Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis; Mary Pickford; Bob Hope; Lawrence Welk; Lucille Ball; Douglas Fairbanks; Mickey Rooney; Jane Russell; Jackie Gleason with the June Taylor dancers; Liberace; Sophie Tucker; Pearl Bailey; Tyrone Power; Sammy Kaye; Kathleen Turner; Jimmy Stewart; Timothy Hutton; Christopher Reeve; Jerry Seinfeld; Dennis Quaid; Sarah Jessica Parker with Matthew Broderick; Diana Ross; Bruce Springsteen; Liza Minnelli; Helen Mirren; Mick Jagger; members of Bon Jovi ; and

**WHEREAS**, the **William Penn** has also hosted such world leaders and government officials as the Dalai Lama; Presidents, Theodore Roosevelt; William Howard Taft; Harry S. Truman; Dwight D. Eisenhower; John F. Kennedy; Richard Nixon; William J. Clinton and recent Presidential hopefuls, Senator Hillary Clinton; Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that, as Frick had anticipated, the **William Penn Hotel** quickly became and has remained the social center of the City of Pittsburgh and the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby commend, Henry Clay Frick for his foresight and fortitude to build such a magnificent structure and does also commend all of the stewards of this grand landmark over the past 92 years.

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