

## Broad Street Brief: Mayoral Candidates Participate in Forums, Receive Major Endorsements; Working Families Party Aims to Expand its Reach During Upcoming Elections

### CITY HALL

#### 2023 Mayoral Race Update: Candidate Forums, Major Endorsements, Who's Not Running

With 110 days left until the May 16 mayoral primary, Democratic candidates have been hard at work campaigning, with many of them participating in a litany of forums for the opportunity to present their platforms to voters. Recent forum topics have included advancing economic opportunity in Philadelphia's Black and brown communities, how best to address the city's gun violence epidemic, and LGBT+ issues.

Some candidates have also made waves in regards to key endorsements they've picked up. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees' District Council 33 announced their endorsement of grocery store magnate Jeff Brown, while former City Councilmember At-Large Helen Gym was endorsed this week by both the Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance — an organization of which she is a founding member — and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. Most recently, former Mayor John Street endorsed former City Controller Rebecca Rhyhart, making him the only former mayor to make an endorsement thus far.

Meanwhile, former Mayor Michael Nutter has officially dispelled rumors that he is planning on entering the already extremely crowded mayoral race. During an event hosted by the Philadelphia Citizen last week, Mayor Nutter made clear that he will not be running for his former office "in 2023 or in any other year into the future." Mayor Nutter served two consecutive mayoral terms from 2008 to 2016.

#### Working Families Party Looks to Expand Reach in Upcoming Elections

Nicolas O'Rourke is hoping to duplicate the success of fellow Working Families Party member Kendra Brooks in his run for one of the seven at-large seats on Philadelphia City Council. Because only five candidates may be elected from each political party, two at-large seats are always guaranteed to be filled by members of a minority party. Until Councilmember Brooks' stunning 2019 victory, Republicans have traditionally held both of these seats. If both Working Families Party candidates are successful during this year's election, City Council will be without a Republican at-large member for the first time in decades. City Council is not the only office where the Working Families Party is looking to expand its influence, as Jarrett Smith recently announced his campaign for City Commissioner.

#### Philadelphia Flower Show Promises "Electric" Return to Pennsylvania Convention Center

After two years of being hosted outdoors due to COVID-19 precautions, the Philadelphia Flower Show will at long last return to its home at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in March. Now in its 194th year, the event's theme will be "Garden Electric" and will feature exhibits intended to evoke the "spark of joy that comes while giving or receiving flowers," according to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. The exhibits themselves will also be larger — twice the size of the previous indoor exhibits — and feature a more carefully curated walking route, ensuring that visitors will be able to experience all the show has to offer.

#### SEPTA to Begin Rollout of New Countdown Clocks This Spring



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- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) has announced that its new countdown clocks will begin making their appearance at train and trolley stations across the city, starting with 13th Street Station on the Market-Frankford Line, which is expected to be operational by the end of March. The countdown clocks, which will be updated in real time, will allow SEPTA riders to know approximately how soon the next train or trolley is expected to arrive. While there is no exact rollout schedule for the rest of SEPTA's stations, riders can expect to see these clocks integrated with digital messages that are displayed on existing screens.

#### **Animal Tranquilizer Xylazine is the Latest Front in Philadelphia's Battle Against the Opioid Epidemic**

The phenomenon of "lacing" opioids with other substances is not a new one, but each additional substance presents new, unique challenges to those who are working to prevent overdose-related deaths among Philadelphians living with substance use disorders. Recently, outreach specialists have noticed an uptick in injuries related to the injection of xylazine, an animal tranquilizer not approved for human use. The substance, known colloquially as "tranq," is often used to cut fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that has risen in prominence in recent years. Not only can xylazine make the opioid overdose-reversal drug naloxone less effective, it also doesn't respond to traditional withdrawal treatments.

#### **Roosevelt Boulevard Safety Project to Receive \$78 Million in Federal Infrastructure Funding**

On Monday, Senator Bob Casey and Mayor Jim Kenney announced that the Route for Change — a project to make Roosevelt Boulevard, currently one of Philadelphia's deadliest streets, safer for drivers and pedestrians — will be receiving a \$78 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The funding is part of President Joe Biden's 2021 bipartisan infrastructure bill, and will go toward reconstructing pedestrian crossings, widening the medians, and adding sidewalk infrastructure. Accidents along the boulevard killed more than a hundred people between 2012 and 2021.

#### **Philadelphia Police Department Expected to Continue to Endure Staffing Shortage**

Despite 150 new officers expected to graduate from four new police academy classes this year, the staffing shortage plaguing the Philadelphia Police Department is expected to continue into 2023. The shortage is due to high rates of attrition — which itself is due primarily to firings and retirements — compared to the number of new recruits. Currently, the city plans to recruit candidates more heavily from outside of Philadelphia, though Commissioner Danielle Outlaw has not provided details on exactly what this recruitment effort would entail.

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