



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2022-1764, **Version:** 1

A resolution recognizing the 125th anniversary of the Parthenon.

WHEREAS, in 1824, classical scholar and college president Philip Lindsley arrived in Nashville with a vision “to create on the frontier, a new Athens, dedicated to Education and the Arts”; and

WHEREAS, throughout the 19th century, the city evolved from its frontier roots as “The Athens of the West” into “The Athens of the South,” dotted with classical architecture and boasting outstanding universities; and

WHEREAS, city leaders breathed life into Lindsley’s vision, creating as a centerpiece of the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition, an arts building boldly replicating the iconic ancient Parthenon; and

WHEREAS, the Parthenon was designed by architect William Crawford Smith and built in 1897 as part of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in reference to Nashville’s nickname as the “Athens of the South” and is the world’s only full-scaled replica of the original Parthenon in Athens, Greece; and

WHEREAS, originally built of plaster, wood, and brick it was not intended to be permanent, but the cost of demolition combined with its popularity resulted in it being left standing after the Exposition ended. Two decades later the landmark was rebuilt on the same foundations using concrete; and

WHEREAS, the Parthenon stands proudly as the centerpiece of Centennial Park and contains the 42-foot tall Athena Parthenos by Nashville sculptor Alan LeQuire which is a careful reconstruction of the long-lost original in Greece; and

WHEREAS, the plaster replicas of the Parthenon Marbles found in the Naos are direct casts of the original sculptures, which adorned the pediments of the Athenian Parthenon dating back to 438 B.C. The originals of these fragments are housed in the British Museum in London; and

WHEREAS, Greece selected Nashville as the headquarters for the U.S. branch of the Hellenic Institute of Cultural Diplomacy based largely on the presence of the Parthenon; and

WHEREAS, the Parthenon served as the location for the political rally in the climactic scene of Robert Altman’s 1975 film Nashville, it was used in the 2000 PBS series Greeks: Crucible of Civilization, and in the 2010 film Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief; and

WHEREAS, the Parthenon also contains an art museum whose permanent collection contains 63 paintings by 19th and 20th century American artists donated by James M. Cowan; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the 125th anniversary of the Centennial Exposition. The Parthenon is currently featuring Looking Back - 125 Years After the Tennessee Centennial Exposition on display in its West Gallery from May 13 through January 8, 2023; and

WHEREAS, for many generations, the world’s only full-scale replica of the ancient temple has continued to serve as a beautiful educational and cultural anchor to the city’s community, and a testimony to Nashville’s love and high regard for Greece and its people, and all that great nation has meant to the world; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognizes the 125th anniversary of

Nashville's iconic Parthenon, and joins the people of Nashville, the U.S. branch of the Hellenic Institute of Cultural Diplomacy, and Philhellenes everywhere in celebration of our beloved Nashville Parthenon.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council hereby goes on record as recognizing the 125th anniversary of the Parthenon.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.