In First Branch
Baltimore April 29. 1846

Gentlemen of the Second Branch,

In consequence of the delay arising from the necessity of printing again the assessment bill in bill form, with the amendments of your Branch, we respectfully propose with your concurrence, that when the Council adjourns this afternoon, it stands adjourned until Friday afternoon next

The message was dissented from by the following vote, the yeas and nays being called for by Mr Hooper.

Yeas – Messrs President, Turner, Collins, Watkins and Gross – 5.

Nays. – Messrs Colton, O'Leary, Walsh, Hickman, Bishop, Swan, Davis, Hooper, Starr, Brown and McCurley – 11.

Mr Davis from the committee, submitted the following report which was read and laid on the table.

The joint committee on streets, to whom was referred a resolution of the First Branch, directing them to ascertain and report to this Branch the present state of our local legislation upon the subject of paving and repaving the public highways of the City of Baltimore; and also that they report whether any alteration of the existing ordinances is required by the convenience or interest of our people, – have given the subject their serious attention, from the heavy expense the city annually incurs for the repairing and repaving of the public highways, and the prospect of those expenses every year increasing, from the great quantity of paving done, and the very imperfect manner of executing the work, the materials used, and the superintendence of the work.

The committee to carry out more fully the object of the resolution, determined to visit the city of Philadelphia, knowing that the attention of the City Council of that Corporation had been recently much occupied with the subject of improving their highways. The committee would beg leave here to offer to the President and Directors of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Rail Road Company their thanks for the very polite tender of tickets for the trip; to his Honor the Mayor of Philadelphia; to Charles S. Poulson, John Price Wetherill, Abraham S. Lewis, Edmund Wilcox and Coleman Fisher Esqs a committee of the Councils, and Adam Fraguair, Thomas K. Wallace, and Lane Schofield Esqrs, City Commissioners for the many courtesies extended to us, and also for much valuable information and statistical documents.

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The committee would most respectfully recommend to the favourable consideration of the Council, the following suggestions.

First – We are of opinion that the ordinance allowing individuals to make private contracts should be repealed, and that all streets hereafter to be paved, should be publicly advertised for, and the contracts made by the City Commissioners.

Second. – We are of opinion that in paving new streets, the foundations for the stone should be 12 inches deep in the best and firmest earth, and at least 18 inches or two feet deep in soft or other bad bottoms the bed or foundations for the stone, should be gravel or sharp sand, rolled in two or three layers with a heavy roller, and the top finished off with a bed of loose gravel merely sufficient to receive the stone.

Third. The stone ought to be hard and of good form, and as nearly uniform as possible, none to be less than 6 inches and none more than 8 inches deep; all stone should be entirely rejected, which when properly set, would have a greater face surface than depth, and no paving should be covered with sand until the same has been examined by a majority of the City Commissioners and approved.

Fourth. In repaving old streets, when the depth of sand or gravel is sufficient for the foundations for the new work, instead of picking up the old gravel bed, ram the ground on which the repaving is to be done as solid as possible, in form corresponding to the arch of the street when finished; we believe that the practice of digging off the old gravel and loosening the old foundation is injurious, as a firm bed in paving or repaving is all important for the stability of the work. In support of these suggestions we beg leave to offer the following extract of the report made by a committee of the Franklin Institute of Pennsylvania, to the Councils of Philadelphia, as follows:

The Surveyors say, that in forming the pebble pavement upon the Ridge Road, where the old turnpike was, the surface of that turnpike road was as little disturbed as possible, and where it was least disturbed, and the least loose gravel was used, that part has stood admirably, better indeed, than any other pavement in the district; and no part of the old turnpike road being much below the bottom of the pebble pavement, it has all stood well

Fifth. In paving or repaving all highways of less than 20 feet in width, the pavement should be concave with a gutter in the centre, of not less than 10 inches wide, and to have laid two parallel lines of stone flagging for tramways of not less than 3 feet long 2 feet wide and 5 inches thick, the edges dressed square, the whole thickness of the stone, so as to make a good joint,

Sixth