



**Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

CHEVY CHASE, BARNABY WOODS, HAWTHORNE

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3/4 G-06 - Dan Bradfield
3/4 G-07 - Christopher Fromboluti, Vice-Chair

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Minutes

Special Meeting on Community Center Modernization
September 17, 2018

**Introduction and purpose of the meeting (00:00 on the video recording,
<https://youtu.be/If3zAAu00qo>)**

Commissioner Speck began this special ANC 3/4G meeting with introductions by the other Commissioners. Commissioners Maydak, Clayman, Fromboluti, Malitz, and Bradfield were present. Commissioner Speck also introduced Brent Sisco, the project manager for the Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Sisco introduced Jamie Johnson, from Kramer Consulting, a company that advises the Department of General Services on construction management and contracting. In addition, Archie Williams, the Intergovernmental Officer for the DC Public Library, attended the meeting. About 30 residents attended.

Commissioner Speck summarized the ANC's efforts over the past two years to plan for the modernization of the Chevy Chase Community Center. The ANC held 16 community meetings and conducted an intensive community survey, which culminated in a report and recommendations to the Mayor and the Council in January 2018. Based on the ANC's analysis, the Mayor proposed and the Council adopted a budget of \$19 million to be expended over FY 2019, FY 2020, and FY 2020 to modernize the Community Center.

Commissioner Speck said that the upcoming project presents a tremendous opportunity and challenge. The Community Center should be the inspirational hub of the neighborhood, an attractive and inviting multigenerational gathering place. It should facilitate the creativity of our talented residents and build community. Achieving these

goals requires cooperation and participation by a broad cross-section of residents and government representatives working together.

Commissioner Speck said that this meeting would focus on the process to be followed to meet these goals — who should be involved, how to best organize ourselves, whether we should assign tasks to working groups, how to make sure that the project reflects the broadest community consensus. No substantive decisions will be made at this meeting, but we hope to lay the ground work going forward.

Process for developing the configuration and design (12:00)

Mr. Sisco then described DPR's typical process for a project like this one. The first step is to prepare a Request for Proposals for the design work in preparation for hiring a design firm. The solicitation for proposals provides direction to the prospective design firms about what the project should entail. In this case, the ANC's January 2018 report will be part of the RFP so that the design firms will not be starting from scratch.

DPR will be looking for an architect with experience working with the District and one that has done multiple projects similar to the Community Center modernization. The winning design firm will be selected based on its responsiveness of the proposal. While cost is a consideration, DPR may not select the lowest cost bid.

Once DPR selects the design firm, they usually come to the community so that the design team can hear from the residents what programs they want. The expected programming drives the design, and the community's desires will be an important factor. DPR attempts to align its vision with the community's. Recent DPR projects have included the Edgewood Recreation Center (<https://dgs.dc.gov/page/edgewood-recreation-center>) and the Palisades Community Center (<https://dpr.dc.gov/page/palisades-community-center-0>).

Mr. Sisco indicated that the community design consultation process can take up to two years on some projects. (For the Lafayette Recreation Center, the community meetings have already taken a year.) He said that meetings are generally held every 60 to 90 days so that the designers can incorporate community input into revised designs. DPR generally likes to conduct a survey, but in this case, the ANC has already conducted an extensive survey, which will be a time saver.

Mr. Sisco said that they will begin preparing the RFP in early October and hope to issue it in late-October or early-November. The responses would be due about 30 calendar days later. (They have found that the quality of the proposals will be better if they allow sufficient time for the design firms to prepare their responses.) The architect should be hired in about January 2019, so that community engagement could begin shortly thereafter. In response to questions, Mr. Sisco said that the bids are normally

reviewed by an evaluation panel that consists of District employees; the community is not usually involved in that review process. Mr. Sisco later said, however, that it may be possible for an ANC representative to work with DPR in preparing the RFP and in evaluating the bids. Commissioner Speck suggested that Commissioner Fromboluti would be an ideal choice to work with DPR on the RFP and bid review since he is an architect and is familiar with the community's needs. Mr. Sisco said that was a good suggestion, and he would look into whether it could be done.

In response to a question whether DPR will look to state-of-the-art facilities in preparing the Community Center's design, Mr. Sisco said that they have done just that at recent projects, and he cited the Kenilworth Recreation Center (<https://dpr.dc.gov/page/kenilworth-recreation-center>) as an example where they have a wing devoted to seniors with lounge furniture and other amenities as well as a demonstration kitchen. He also pointed to the Palisades Community Center as an example of creating intergenerational space.

Patrick Williams, a neighborhood architect who has been involved in planning for the Community Center modernization process from the beginning, asked whether the ANC's report would be part of the RFP and whether it would be given to the design team. Mr. Sisco said that it would likely be part of the RFP. Mr. Williams also asked whether the construction would be phased. Commissioner Fromboluti said that phasing could be investigated, but it was unlikely that it would be feasible to keep part of the Community Center open during construction. Mr. Sisco said that they would make that decision together with the designers, construction contractor, and the community. Samantha Nolan asked whether DPR had determined whether the building had asbestos that would have to be contained and abated, and that may be a consideration in determining whether phased work was feasible. Mr. Sisco said that no examination has been made, but that contamination would certainly be a consideration.

A resident asked when decisions about programs would be locked in, and Mr. Sisco said that these decisions would be made after the architect is on board and after community meetings. DPR may supplement the community's identification of programs in order to provide a full complement of programs. Another resident asked whether the \$19 million appropriated for this project includes funding for transition space, and Mr. Sisco said that the budget is limited to the capital construction costs and cannot be used for transition expenses. Commissioner Speck noted, however, that if additional funding is required in the operations budget, the ANC could ask the Mayor and the Council to add money to DPR's operational budget.

Carol Campbell, Director of Resident Services at Knollwood, said that Knollwood has accommodated a wide variety of programs in its space, and she urged flexibility in the design. She noted that height limitations restrict some programs. She also emphasized the need for the latest technology and for storage space. Jay Thal urged DPR to consider

building a community center at another, more central location in Ward 3 before renovating the Chevy Chase facility, which is located on the edge of the Ward.

Summary of January 2018 Final Report and Recommendations (50:00)

Commissioner Speck suggested that the ANC's January 2018 Final Report and Recommendations should be the starting point for planning the Community Center's modernization since it was the product of many public meetings, an in-depth survey of the community, and the ANC's analysis. He cited the 157-page report's eight specific recommendations as the guides for the upcoming work:

1. DPR and DGS must continue to work closely with the ANC, the community, and nearby neighbors to assure suitable transition space for key programs (e.g., ballet and fencing) and to develop more detailed plans for the Community Center to ensure that the final interior and exterior design meets current and future community needs.
2. Remove, reuse, or recycle the interior and exterior walls of the existing structure leaving only the structural supports and floors;
3. Design the new Community Center to fit within the existing structure or within the additional space between the rear of the building and the current parking lot;
4. Include space in the new building for a fitness center with equipment, a lecture/performance hall with about 125 seats, meeting/games/party rooms, a half-court gymnasium, a childcare room with an indoor play area, a kitchen, a quiet lounge, an activity/tech lounge, a dance/yoga/Pilates studio, a fencing/exercise room, a pottery area and an arts and crafts space, offices, and rooftop amenities (e.g., a garden, greenhouse, and/or outdoor lounge);
5. Coordinate the design of the modernized Lafayette Recreation Center and the Chevy Chase Recreation Center (at 41st Street and Livingston) to avoid duplication with the Community Center and to take advantage of any synergies that can be achieved;
6. Consider adding surface parking spaces while minimizing the impact on nearby neighbors;
7. Create a new building that is aesthetically appealing, in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood and buildings, constructed to the latest sustainability standards and fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), including the updated ADA Standards for Accessible Design (2010 Standards), requirements, and resilient so that it can serve as a refuge in case of an emergency or other widespread disturbance; and
8. Work with the District Public Library to coordinate any improvements to the Chevy Chase Library to take advantage of synergies between the two buildings and to unify and harmonize the campus to the extent possible.

Commissioner Malitz noted that the Report is based on data collected in a survey of 929 respondents who provided answers for about 1450 individuals (including children). This was a broad response that gives credibility to the resulting data.

Commissioner Fromboluti noted that some of the Report's proposed spaces — e.g., the half-court gym — were included in the Commission's recommended budget of \$24 million. He said that those facilities may not be feasible with a \$19 million budget. Commissioner Bradfield said that it would also be possible for the Commission to seek additional funding in the FY 2020 or FY2021 budgets.

Planning Process and Creation of Working Group for Transitional Space to Accommodate Existing Programs (1:01)

Commissioner Speck asked whether it would be useful to form a working group to assist during the RFP and design contractor selection process. Commissioner Fromboluti and Mr. Sisco indicated that there was no need for a working group at this stage, but that input from such a group could be useful after an architect is selected.

Commissioner Speck indicated that there is a more pressing need for a working group to address the need for interim space to meet the needs of current program participants. This effort will need substantial advance preparation to locate and arrange for alternative space. The timing will be particularly important if any additional funding is required since the Mayor will begin developing the operating budget for FY 2020 over the next few months and will submit it to the Council in February, 2019.

A resident asked if there is a group at DPR that handles temporary arrangements for space, and Mr. Sisco said that there is no such group. He added, however, that there are individuals at DPR that may be able to assist in locating space. Another resident asked whether there are typically contractual penalties on the construction contractor if completion is delayed. Mr. Sisco said that those contracts will include both incentives and penalties related to completion within the prescribed schedule.

The teachers in the Community Center's ballet program emphasized their need for specialized space to make sure that the vibrant dance programs could continue during construction. The dance floor in the Community Center is not available at any other DPR building. They said that they have already begun to look for other space and have talked with George Washington University about using its studio space. One of the senior residents indicated that the YMCA exercise instructor had also begun looking for alternative space, and it might be possible to accommodate some of the senior exercise programs at the Lisner Home.

Commissioner's Clayman and Malitz agreed to lead a working group that will gather information on the programs that will need to be accommodated and on the kinds of space required and report back to at the next meeting. They will look into the types of arrangements that may be possible, including whether alternative space will require a fee. They asked anyone interested in participating in this working group to give them their contact information.

Scheduling (1:12)

The group agreed that we need to develop a transition plan soon if we expect to require funding in the FY 2020 budget. We agreed to meet again on October 15, 2018, to focus on the transition needs.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.