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5601 Connecticut Avenue N.W.  
P.O. Box 6252 Washington, D.C. 20015  
Chevychaseanc3@verizon.net  
<http://www.anc3g.org>  
YouTube: ANC3G  
202.363.5803

**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the  
Committee on Recreation and Youth Affairs  
Budget Hearing on the  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
April 5, 2019**

Chairperson White and members of the Committee on Recreation and Youth Affairs, I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G (Chevy Chase), and I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its March 25, 2019 meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

Based in large part on our ANC's research, community survey, and analysis, the Council and the Mayor appropriated \$19 million in the FY 2019 Capital Budget to modernize the Chevy Chase Community Center — \$3.5 million in FY 2019, \$4.5 million in FY 2020, and \$11 million in FY 2021 (<http://bit.ly/2Jqm2vM> at page 180). These funds cover only the capital costs of construction, not operating costs that the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) may incur as a result of the modernization.

On January 10, 2019, the Department of General Services (DGS) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for architectural/engineering services for the modernization

(<http://bit.ly/2TVChoM>). Although some of the projected milestone dates in the RFP have already slipped, DGS will likely issue an RFP for the construction management work sometime in FY 2020, with construction likely to begin during FY 2020.

During the expected 12 to 18 months of construction, the Community Center will be closed and unavailable for the many programs and meetings that it normally hosts. In anticipation of this extended closure, in late-2018, our ANC surveyed the current programs available at the Community Center — both those run by DPR and those run by others. The survey gathered information on those programs' space requirements, the number of participants, and any special facilities that they needed.

Commissioners then met with DPR in early February 2019, to discuss DPR's capability to provide alternative space for the Community Center's programs during the time the Community Center will be closed and unavailable during. At that meeting, we emphasized the need to maintain long-standing programs with the expectation that they would return to the new Community Center once construction was completed. We noted that some programs are unique and should be given particular attention. For instance, the Community Center's outstanding ballet classes must have a slip-resistant, shock-absorbing floor, and there are a limited number of those facilities in the District (and none at any other DPR facility). Similarly, the Community Center's world-class fencing program (which has produced national champions and a recent Olympian) requires a high ceiling, a shock-absorbing floor, and ability to install an overhead wire scoring system. Both of these programs serve the entire District, and they need to have a suitable place to

meet until they can return to the Community Center with new facilities expressly designed to accommodate them.

The Community Center also acts as a de facto senior center in the absence of any senior wellness center in Ward 3. In addition to exercise and other classes for designed specifically seniors, the Community Center provides a convenient, neighborhood place for seniors to meet and socialize. We need a nearby, temporary location for these activities that will return to the Community Center once it reopens.

Following that meeting, we gave DPR the detailed survey results as well as a copy of the survey instrument that we used to obtain those results and asked for their assistance in locating space for all of the programs that will be displaced. We suggested that if DPR space was not available, DPR could assist in identifying other facilities (e.g., public schools, the University of the District of Columbia, or vacant storefronts in the neighborhood) that might be used temporarily. On February 28, 2019, DPR responded that

we cannot provide transitional space during the modernization of the Chevy Chase Community Center. . . . However, we do recommend that the community try to utilize the programs and activities at nearby recreation centers until the completion of the modernization. We do understand that the construction will severely impact the current offerings at the location. However, once the construction is complete, the community will have access to all new amenities and resources.

We are concerned that key programming at the Chevy Chase Community Center will be displaced during construction with no viable alternatives available. To avoid this unwelcome situation, we urge the Council to include \$200,000 or whatever is reasonably necessary in DPR's FY 2020 operating budget to acquire suitable temporary space for

important and unique programs at the Community Center that are not offered at nearby DPR facilities but that must be maintained while the Community Center is closed. Many of these programs serve more than Chevy Chase or Ward 3, attracting residents from across the District. If we displace them now and provide no temporary alternative, they may never be revived. This modest budget request will ensure the viability of these programs for future participants.