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ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

CHEVY CHASE, BARNABY WOODS, HAWTHORNE

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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the  
Committee on Recreation and Youth Affairs  
Performance Oversight Hearing on the  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
February 21, 2020**

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 February 10, 2020 meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4). Over the past year, our Commission has worked closely with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to upgrade two important facilities in our community — the Lafayette Recreation Center and the Chevy Chase Community Center. Both projects have been delayed, but are now making progress. We look forward to collaborating with DPR to provide two new centers that will serve our community for decades.

We remain concerned, however, about arrangements to maintain important Community Center programs during construction of the new building. We discussed this con-

cern in our April 5, 2019 testimony at the Committee’s budget hearing for DPR (<http://bit.ly/2Shfpx4>). Since then, the expected construction period has been delayed, and work on the new Community Center is not expected to begin until early 2021 and will likely last for 12 to 18 months. During that period, the Community Center will be closed and unavailable for the many programs and meetings that it normally hosts.

Our Commission conducted a survey last year of the current programming at the Community Center — both those programs 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. 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 designed specifically for 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 February 2019 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. We urge DPR to work with the ANC to find 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. We ask the Committee and DPR for help to ensure the viability of these programs for future participants.

Thank you.