

BROOKLAND NEIGHBORHOOD CIVIC ASSOCIATION

1502 Otis Street, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20017

QUEENS CHAPEL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 4490 Washington, D.C. 20017-4490

MICHIGAN PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

4401 13th Place, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20017

WOODRIDGE CIVIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 92405 Washington, D.C. 20090

May 16, 2009

Dr. Ximena Hartsock
Acting Director
Department of Parks and Recreation
3149 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20010

Dear Ms. Hartsock,

On April 17, 2009, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) issued a proposal to change the existing fees for various District of Columbia recreation programs and facilities (District of Columbia Register, Volume 56-No.16, pages 002970-002977). On behalf of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association, the Queens Chapel Civic Association, the Michigan Park Citizens Association, and the Woodridge Civic Association we are writing to express our concern about these proposed changes.

DPR proposes to increase and add new fees for many popular recreation programs and recreation center facilities. We are particularly concerned about the following:

1. Increased swimming fees with no special discounted rates for children or seniors: All DC residents, regardless of age, currently enjoy free access to DC recreation center swimming pools thanks to a generous private donation and partnership with the city to promote healthy and active living and fitness among District residents. DPR's proposal provides no assurance that this beneficial program will continue.
2. New fees for use of recreation center meeting rooms: DPR proposes to charge \$30/hour for use of medium-sized multi-purpose rooms and \$50/hour for large-sized multi-purpose rooms. Currently there are no charges for use of these meeting rooms. These new charges will hit civic associations and other non-profits groups especially hard as we rely on use of these spaces for community meetings. We believe civic associations and non-profit organizations should be exempt from these proposed fee increases.

3. New fees for lane and pool rentals: DPR proposes to charge \$12/hour for lane rentals and \$175/hour for pool rentals. If these fees go into effect, we are concerned about how these fees will be implemented. Private use of the lanes and pools (e.g., for private swimming lessons or private pool parties) should be confined to very limited hours and should not adversely displace DC residents who can not afford to pay for private swimming privileges.
4. Charges for registration passes: DPR proposes to charge DC residents for the purchase of registration passes (\$6.50 children, \$8 youth, \$10 adults). Without explanation, no charges would apply to non-residents.
5. New facility rental fees and charges for leagues and teams: DPR proposes a host of new fees for use of fields, indoor gyms, and courts including a \$20 application fee per use.
6. Lack of transparency regarding proposed fee changes: In issuing its proposal, DPR did not include information regarding existing fees or how proposed new fees differ from existing fees. Therefore, it is very difficult if not impossible to determine the overall impact of the proposed new charges on District residents. Likewise, it is very difficult to determine the overall impact of the proposed new charges on the ability to cover recreation program expenses.

The Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association, the Queens Chapel Civic Association, the Michigan Park Citizens Association, and the Woodridge Civic Association are concerned that DPR's proposed fee increases will undermine the city's fitness and health goals and put recreational programs and facilities economically out of reach for many District of Columbia residents who currently enjoy, benefit from, and rely on these programs. We are particularly concerned about the effects of the proposed increases on our senior citizens.

We, respectfully, urge DPR to 1) reconsider its proposal in light of these concerns, 2) provide information regarding the overall economic impacts of any proposed fee increases, and 3) suspend any future proposals until a new Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation has been appointed and confirmed.

If you would like more information about any of these comments or concerns, please contact Caroline Petti, President, Brookland Civic Association at (202) 529-0953.

Sincerely,

Caroline Petti, President
Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association

Brian Summers, President
Queens Chapel Civic Association

Paul Wood, President
Michigan Park Citizens Association

Anthony J. Hood, President
Woodridge Civic Association

cc. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty
Ward 5 Councilmember Harry Thomas, Jr.