

September 15, 2005

Mayor Anthony Williams
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Sherwood Recreation Center Indoor and Outdoor Maintenance

Dear Mayor Williams:

On October 8, 2003, you joined local officials and residents at the grand opening of the Sherwood Recreation Center, a state-of-the-art recreation center located at the corners of 10th and G Streets NE. At the time, you highlighted to residents that the city was committed to maintaining this facility as a center for recreational and community activities and, for the most part, your vision has come true. The center is indeed a center for young and old to join in a wide range of activities. However, the facility due to inadequate oversight has started down the path of the old recreation center – an eyesore and nuisance.

At the opening in October 2003, you saw freshly laid grass and planted shrubs and trees. The sight was pleasant and appealing. However, since that time, the city has done little or nothing to maintain the landscaping. The property's landscaping has become overrun by weeds and invasive species, and the once large section of grass used for outdoor sports, such as tag football, has been worn down to the dirt. Residents have reached out to officials at the center and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), but the methods of addressing this issue have been topical at best. The solution to this problem is quite simple – regular landscaping maintenance.

A major issue in the summer months is the lighting. Sherwood is well-equipped with lights for its basketball and tennis courts, walking track, parking lot, and pathways, but the management at the center has not made the maintenance requests needed to make sure that these lights are replaced when they burn out. As such, the area surrounding the center is dark in the evening and is increasing becoming a gathering place for nefarious activities. When the center first opened, nefarious individuals had little interest in hanging out in the area surrounding the center. Residents hope that you can help us address this issue.

Sherwood is equipped with a medium-sized parking lot that is intended to handle visitors to the center and teachers at the adjacent school. The gate used to manage entry to the parking lot has been broken for over four months. Again, despite continued requests by residents the parking lot gate remains broken and center management has indicated no interest in addressing this issue. Please help us.

Upon the opening of Sherwood, center management had the Department of Public Works (DPW) place trash receptacles around the center. The trash receptacles have worked to an extent, but the center remains a popular place to leave miscellaneous trash and illegal dumping

(mostly in the parking lot). This matter can be addressed quite simply – the center can send staff around the center a couple of times each day to collect trash. Residents have requested that center management execute such a plan, but no such plan has ever been executed. Please help us execute such a program so that the Sherwood Recreation Center can again be the center of our community's recreational and social activities.

Street safety is another issue that we feel has been overlooked. Recently, the city has started to use thick white lines and rumble strip in sensitive traffic areas, like schools and recreation centers, but for some reason Sherwood has been overlooked. These simple solution surrounding the recreation center would help immensely and their cost is minimal. Again, please help us.

Most recently, you attended a back-to-school event at Sherwood and it was only then that residents saw even the tiny amount of clean up and landscaping that has occurred in recent months. Bottom line, your recent visit demonstrated that DPR is capable of much more. This wonderful center is deserving of better treatment.

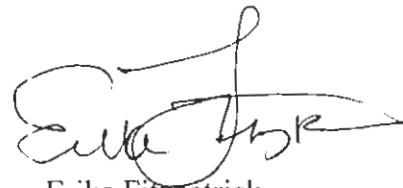
A common response residents hear from your staff is a request for greater community involvement. We want to assure you that the residents surrounding the Sherwood Recreation Center have already been involved deeply with the center and its daily operations, but have recently become disillusioned with the absence of an adequate response.

Further, we want to assure you that all of us are firm believers in the “cracked window theory.” We have tried to fix all of the cracked windows with as little municipal government assistance as possible, but this task requires intervention at a higher level. We look forward to your reply and proposed action plan.

Sincerely,



Michael Kukkon
625 10th Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20002



Erika Fitzpatrick
605 10th Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Cc: Neil Albert, Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families, and Elders
Sharon Ambrose, Council Member
Robert C. Bobb, City Administrator
Peter Jones, Ward Six Coordinator
Joe Fengler, ANC 6A Commissioner