



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
PO Box 15020
Washington, DC 20003



May 31, 2023

Thennie Freeman
Interim Director of the DC Department of Parks and Recreation
1275 First Street, NE, 8th floor,
Washington, DC 20002

Re: ANC 6A Request for DPR attention to ongoing issues at Sherwood

Dear Interim Director,

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on May 11, 2023 our Commission voted 6-0-0 (with 4 Commissioners required for a quorum) to send a letter to your agency requesting: 1) an explanation for the lack of programming at Sherwood over the last two quarters and specific plans for programming in Q3 and Q4; 2) plans for improvement in routine maintenance of the building and ground and cleanliness in the outdoor areas surrounding the building; 3) information on alternative plans for a hypothermia shelter for Winter 2024.

Programming at Sherwood

There is a dearth of programming at Sherwood. As evidence of this point, we scraped 631 program listings (excluding camps and aquatics) off the DPR website and analyzed them by Recreation Center, type of program and target audience. The detailed data are attached. However, in summary, here is what we found.

- Currently, there are **only 6 total offerings at Sherwood** (4 unique program types, one being a drop-in open-access program).
- Currently, 3 of these 6 programs are full.
- These specific programs appear to account for 13 hours of specific programmatic use/week at Sherwood, plus 12.5 hours of "afterschool open access."
 - There are only 2 hours of preschool programming/week, despite the explosion of children in our community.
 - There are 7 hours of indoor pickleball, a program that appears to be run (set-up/breakdown, etc) by the participants themselves.
 - We believe that the same DIY approach may be true of the 2 hours of weekly women's volleyball.

¹ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on anc-6a@googlegroups.com, and newhilleast@groups.io, at www.anc6a.org, on Twitter (@ANC6A) and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.

- There are 2 hours of yoga per week (apparently with an instructor/leader)
 - There appears to be after-school open access to the gym; again, however, without any apparent leadership or organization.
 - Despite a basketball court and a tennis court on site, there is currently no programming around these resources.
 - There are no programs directed at our community's many senior citizens.
 - Nor are there activities aimed at mentoring, leadership, tutoring or just keeping occupied our many middle-school through young adult residents.
 - There are no music, dance or arts programs.

So, how does Sherwood compare with other Recreation Centers? The answer is not so well. Although, one could argue that programming is anemic at many other DPR sites as well. The attached Pivot Tables show the number and ranking of programs by Recreation Center by type of program and by the target audience.

- **40 of 65 DPR sites** offer more programs than Sherwood's 6; with an average of 10 per site and a maximum of 39.
- The most robustly programmed recreation center offers programs in 9 of 11 program categories, compared to Sherwood's 4
- Similarly, the most robustly programmed recreation center addresses 11 (of 17) target audiences versus 3 at Sherwood

We ask that DPR provide a detailed list of what programs will be offered, including days, times, target age group, and number of sessions, over at least the next two quarters.

Improved Maintenance

The Sherwood Facility, both inside and out, is poorly maintained. This is true in terms of routine maintenance, such as ongoing rat abatement, removal of litter and garbage around the facility, and in terms of responding to urgent issues, such as shattered glass in a door.

A partial list of maintenance issues cited by constituents includes:

- A strong smell of gas or fumes in the gym when the furnace is operating
- Weight room equipment that is old and broken
- Poorly maintained/cleaned restrooms
- A long-promised, but still unscheduled replacement of the playground surface
- Need to repair or replace many broken pieces of playground equipment
- Basketball and tennis courts that need to be resurfaced and are often full of trash
- A dumpster area is rat-infested and has a broken fence and piles of trash surrounding each dumpster.
- A walking track that has a dangerous crater in the middle of the grassy soccer field area and a track that may need resurfacing

- Landscaping and shrubbery on the property have been decimated with inappropriate trimming by the "landscaping company" that mows the lawn.
- A historic light on the north side of the entrance walkway is broken off at the base with wire exposed and another device has exposed wire on the southeast corner of the building
- Failure to clean up trash and debris left on the property or to notify authorities of drug use or other dangerous or illegal activities on the property

Alternative Plans for a Hypothermia Shelter for Winter 2024

It appears that Sherwood is one of only one or two DPR facilities used as a hypothermia shelter. The usage of this site is suboptimal for the people who need shelter. Concerns regarding the shelter use include:

- Limitations on the use of the Recreation Center for early morning and later night programs
- Use of storage for cots etc that could otherwise be used for DPR program-related equipment
- Lack of clear accountability and responsibility for security and maintenance due to the number of agencies involved (DHS, DHS contractors, DGS, DPR, DGS and DPR contractors, etc.)

We have been told by DHS that, each year, DPR provides a list of possible sites for shelter usage. Furthermore, DHS has indicated that subject to budgetary decisions, there would be no recreation center-based shelters next winter. We are empathetic to the plight of neighbors in need of emergency shelter for any reason. We ask DPR to allocate emergency shelter in a way that is equitable and transparent. .

Thank you for giving great weight to the recommendations of this Commission. I can be contacted at 6A04@anc.dc.gov, and Commissioner Shapiro can be contacted at 6A03@anc.dc.gov.

On behalf of the Commission,



Amber Gove
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

CC: Council Members: Allen, Bonds, McDuffie, White Sr, White Jr.
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