

Agenda
ANC 6A Community Outreach Committee (COC)
Monday, August 24, 2020 at 7:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Call-in Number: 202-860-2110 - Meeting number (access code): 160 950 6384

For those attending via WebEx: use this link:

<https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/onstage/g.php?MTID=e8ef982b15b462a158b33a10fa34a8a34>

- 7:00 pm Call to Order and Approval of Agenda
- 7:02 pm Welcome/Introductions
- 7:05 pm Community Listening Session
The COC wishes to share guidance as to how community listening sessions are conducted at the Committee's regular meetings. First, as always, the public is welcome at the COC meetings. COC asks that everyone remember to be respectful, even when passions are high. All members of the public are muted during a WebEx Event until recognized to speak by the Chair.
- The guidelines are as follows:
- When you join the WebEx call, audience members should type into the Q&A section indicating that you would like to speak during the meeting.
 - When recognized by the Chair, please introduce yourself and identify which SMD (or block) you live in. Each speaker will have 3 minutes for comments.
 - If someone else has made the point you wished to make, please only say you agree with the point and add any other comments.
- 7:50 pm Letter to the Department of Parks and Recreation – Reopening public spaces during COVID-19
- 8:00 pm Education Issues
- 8:25 pm Other Committee Business
- 8:30 pm Adjourn

This meeting is open to the public and all are invited and welcome.

For more information about the COC and the grant application process, please contact
Veronica Hollmon at roni2865@aol.com or at 202-607-9106.

The next regular meeting of the Community Outreach Committee is
September 28, 2020 at 7:00 pm

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
P.O. Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013

Dear Chairperson Gove and ANC 6A Commissioners,

We, the undersigned ANC 6A constituents, write to express our outrage that seven ANC 6A commissioners voted to approve a [factually inaccurate and racist letter](#) dated June 14, 2020 in support of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and in opposition to widespread [support](#) to defund MPD. The Commission's letter was misleading and does not represent the views of ANC 6A residents. Your express efforts to silence residents, listed below, demonstrates that you are not interested in those views or accountability to your constituents.

- On June 11, 2020, ANC 6A voted to approve this letter without proper notice in the [ANC 6A agenda](#).
- On June 14, 2020, ANC 6A sent this letter without a comment period to ensure constituent input on the subject.
- On July 9, 2020, ANC 6A actively silenced residents in the monthly ANC 6A meeting by [not allowing for public comment](#), a clear abdication of section 1-309.11(b)(3) of the [DC Official Code](#).

As signatories to this constituent letter, we denounce MPD, and we denounce MPD's longstanding policies of stop-and-frisk/jump outs; criminalization and harassment of Black youth in schools and in the community; criminalization of Go-Go; surveillance of Black activists and Black and brown Muslims; cooperation with ICE; exploitation and sexual violence against sex workers and women; and the protection of officers who have murdered members of our community.

The Commission's Letter is Inaccurate and Racist

The Commission's letter demonstrates a severe lack of understanding of how the MPD affects the lives of those you represent. Your letter states that MPD "play[s] an important role in public safety," and its full funding is necessary in order to "allow for continued safe, peaceful First Amendment protests in the District in order to help prevent another response like the one that federal officials produced around Lafayette Park." The facts tell a very different story.

The MPD did not keep DC residents safe during the protests around Lafayette Park. On the contrary, the [ACLU of DC has obtained video evidence](#) of MPD officers firing tear gas at protestors. This tear gassing, as well as the MPD's [kettling](#) and [mass arrests](#) of protestors at 15th and Swann Street NW, and [additional](#) instances in which MPD used [chemical weapons](#) against protestors, constitute human rights violations. These protestors are DC residents, and they are your neighbors. The MPD's recent actions escalated tension and, in many cases, constituted violence. They did not make DC more safe.

Acts of violence by the MPD are not new, and it is not just police “half a country away” that routinely murder Black and brown people. Jamaal Byrd, D’Quan Young, Marquese Alston, Jeffrey Price, Terrence Sterling, Amir Brooks, and Raphael Briscoe were all murdered by the MPD in the past ten years, and their families are still awaiting justice. Say their names.

In the discussion preceding the Commission’s decision to send the letter fully supporting the MPD, ANC 6A Commissioners described the MPD as “DC’s finest” and “a progressive police force.” The letter states that the MPD “provides key services to our community’s diverse residents” and strives to be as “antiracist” as possible. Again, the facts tell a different story.

The MPD’s racist practice of stop-and-frisk disproportionately affects its Black residents. For three years, in [violation](#) of D.C. law, the MPD refused to collect data on its stop-and-frisk practices. When it finally did, [the data showed](#) that between July and December 2019, 72 percent of stop-and-frisk targets were Black, and 88.6 percent of youth under 18 who were targeted were Black—in [a city with a Black population of 46.5 percent](#). Further, during the period in question, violent crime increased by four percent. This data led the Executive Director of the ACLU of DC to state that “MPD’s stop and frisk practices are highly ineffective and potentially violate the constitutional rights of Black people in the District on a daily basis.”

The MPD employs officers who have been photographed [wearing white supremacist images](#) and officers who had to be [explicitly ordered](#) to stop handcuffing children after handcuffing a “[totally innocent](#)” ten-year-old Black child right here in Ward 6. MPD officers have been accused of surveilling [Black Lives Matter activists](#). MPD officers have been under investigation for [sexual assault and violence](#) against sex workers, many of whom are Black and brown trans women. MPD officers have been [sued](#) for the assault and misgendering of trans residents. MPD officers have been accused of [egregious violations](#) of the rights of disabled DC residents.

MPD’s racist practices have lethal consequences. MPD has an average annual rate of 7.6 killings of Black people in D.C., compared to an average annual rate of 0.7 killings of white people—a disparity in which Black people were 11 times [more likely to be killed](#) by MPD than white people.

Beyond these racist actions, MPD does not achieve even basic public safety measures. Despite having an annual [operating budget](#) of more than \$500 million, 100 DC residents have been murdered thus far in 2020. This number has [increased each year](#) since 2018. Recently, MPD officers have routinely [failed](#) or [refused](#) to wear lifesaving personal protective equipment (PPE). This further jeopardizes DC’s Black residents who are not only already overpoliced by MPD but who are more [susceptible](#) to COVID-19 illness and fatalities due to [structural medical racism](#) and [racist health disparities](#). According to a July 2020 report by American Public Media, Black residents in D.C. [constitute](#) 74 percent of coronavirus deaths and have a fatality rate that is 5.9 times higher than white residents—the [largest disparity](#) in death rates between Black and white residents among any other city in the country with published demographic data.

The Commission's Letter Does Not Represent the Views of Many Residents

These are only some of the reasons that of the more than [16,000 people](#) who signed up to testify at the June 2020 hearing on the MPD budget, 99 percent supported decreasing MPD funding. And we, as residents of Ward 6, and you, as Commissioners in Ward 6, have a responsibility to hold the MPD accountable.

Ward 6 is the [most quickly gentrifying](#) ward in one of the most quickly gentrifying cities in the nation. The Black population around H Street has [dropped](#) from 77 percent in 1990 to 45.2 percent in 2010, and this trend appears to have continued in the years since. There are [well documented correlations](#) between gentrifying neighborhoods and wealthier, whiter residents calling the police on Black residents over "quality of life" complaints in public spaces. As investments to this neighborhood cater primarily to newer, wealthier, and whiter residents that continue to pour into H Street and other historically Black spaces in Ward 6, we would do well to remember the history of state-sponsored redlining and strategic neglect and divestment that have had devastating, multigenerational financial consequences for Black residents that [persist to this day](#).

The Commission Failed to Seek Public Input on This Important Issue

The Commission did not include debate on this topic and a potential letter in its published agenda for the June 2020 meeting. The Commission invited MPD to speak but closed the opportunity for public comment before sending this damaging letter. For a full accounting of your actions in this matter, see the timeline enclosed as *Appendix: Timeline*.

The Commission Actively Silenced Public Comment During Its July Meeting

Many of us attempted to share these views with you at the ANC meeting following publication of the Commissioners' letter in support of the MPD, but we were silenced by the people who were elected to represent us. Despite a legal obligation to allow residents to comment during ANC meetings, the Commissioners refused to take attendees off mute for the duration of the meeting and cut the meeting short prior to the "community comment" period. Per the Office of the ANC Executive Director, your actions to silence community input during the July meeting represented an "abandonment of statutory requirements."

Constituents Demand Action from ANC 6A

We are angry and disappointed that our ANC has chosen to ignore the effects that the MPD has on the lives of DC residents -- particularly Black residents. We demand the following steps to begin rebuilding trust with the community.

1. We demand that the Commission reserve significant time on next month's meeting agenda to address these issues, and that such meeting include substantial time for

community input. Alternatively, we demand a separate town hall, properly noticed and allowing for significant community input, for the ANC 6A on these issues.

2. We demand that ANC 6A correct the record by writing another letter to Chairman Mendelson and the D.C. Council, and to Mayor Bowser. This second letter should clearly acknowledge the devastating impact the MPD has on many DC residents, including ANC 6A residents, and state that the Commission's initial letter was sent without the Commission soliciting input from its constituents, per DC statute.

Put simply, the Commission should rescind its prior letter and clarify that it was not representative of ANC 6A residents.

Sincerely,

Laura E. Furr
ANC 6A04

Kris Garrity
ANC 6A01

Sam DeLuca
ANC 6A07

Stephanie DeLuca
ANC 6A07

Madeline Gitomer
ANC 6A06

Evan Preston
ANC 6A08

Enclosure:
Appendix: Timeline

CC:
Chairman Mendelson
Councilmember Charles Allen
Hill Rag

August 15, 2020

Mr. Delano Hunter
Director
Department of Parks and Recreation
1275 First Street NE
Washington DC 20002

Subj: ANC6A Statement – Reopening public spaces during COVID-19

Dear Director Hunter:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on September 10, 2020, our Commission voted X-X-X (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to request that District of Columbia parks and recreational facilities be reopened as part of Phase 2 in DC and that the city make the necessary investments to ensure these facilities are opened safely to support community health and well-being.

Mayor Bowser's announcement on August 5, 2020 that DPR will not be opening the city's spray parks, indoor aquatic centers, and 21 outdoor pools is counter-productive to the health & safety of our city.

Per the DC reopening guidelines, pools can only reopen when the city enters Phase 3. However, all the neighboring districts have opened up public pools with limited access. For example, Prince George's County's Department of Parks and Recreation has opened and provides slots for families to reserve entry in a safe and well-managed system. This serves as a blueprint for reopening pools that DC could also follow. (<http://pgparks.com/4891/Pools-Reopening-Plan>)

While we acknowledge the ongoing health crisis, we encourage DPR to search for more innovative solutions to open some of our much-needed recreation facilities during the summer and into the coming months. This summer has been a particularly difficult one: DC broke its record for the most 90-degree days in a month in July. This lack of access to public swimming pools, in particular, acutely affects kids in vulnerable communities who are experiencing a disproportionate number of stressors. We believe that having strict protocols in place at these facilities could safely mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus while allowing much needed social and heat relief.

At the heart of all decisions must be the residents in our community who depend on the social safety needs provided by the city. We cannot fail in this time of unprecedented need to shut down the public spaces that provide critical services to our community. Beyond pools, we call on DPR to provide outreach support to help families cope while schools are closed to provide safe spaces for DC residents to learn and grow. Based on evidence and research from the CDC and NIH, outdoor activities are some of the safest options for children during COVID with direct benefits both physically and mentally.

While some DC residents can afford to go to private pools to cool off, we call on the Mayor to ensure equal access to all DC residents to enjoy the wonderful District Park and Recreation facilities and programs in the coming months.

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the anc6a-announce@yahoogroups.com, anc6a@yahoogroups.com, and newhilleast@groups.io, at www.anc6a.org, and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.

Sincerely,

Amber Gove
Chair, ANC 6A Commission

cc: Chairman Phil Mendelson, DC Council
Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Councilmember Trayvon White Sr., Ward 8 and Chairperson – The Committee on Recreation and Youth Affairs