



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



March 23, 2022

Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.
Chair, Committee on Recreation, Libraries & Youth Affairs

Re: Support for Capital Improvements at Kingsman Dog Park, Sherwood Recreation Center, and Rosedale DPR facilities in ANC6A

Dear Chair White and Committee Members:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on March 10, 2022, our Commission voted 8-0-0 to send a letter of support for capital investments in Kingsman Dog Park as part of the FY23 budget process and for continued investments and maintenance in DPR-managed parks in 6A.

Our Commission regularly receives requests for and complaints regarding the maintenance of the Kingsman Field and Dog Park, one of the many DPR-managed parks within our Commission boundaries. Kingsman Field and Dog Park, located in the 1300 block of D Street NE, is a good illustration of how the lack of routine maintenance can result in the erosion of the quality of recent investments. Kingsman Dog Park, one of the first official DC dog parks, has received only sporadic improvements from DGS since its installation a decade ago. As a result, the dog park suffers from broken water fountains and trash receptacles, dead and dying trees, and persistent drainage issues. Mud throughout the year and ice in winter make exercising dogs a messy affair. As an alternative, many dog owners have been using the adjacent athletic fields to exercise their dogs. While we are grateful for the beautiful new fields, which received some \$400,000 in upgrades according to a recent communication with DPR External Affairs Christopher Dyer, we are concerned that this investment will be quickly eroded by poor maintenance and daily use by numerous dogs, despite clear signage indicating that no dogs are allowed on the athletic fields.

ANC 6A is recommending that DPR place Kingsman Field Dog Park on the priority list for capital improvement projects for FY23. Kingsman Field Dog Park is more than 10 years old and the infrastructure has deteriorated to the point that it no longer meets our community's needs. Urgent attention is needed to fix the fencing, grading, and surfacing in order to restore the dog park to its original state. We would also welcome DPR's engagement with the newly revived Hill Hounds group to consider alternative surfacing and upgrades. By offering dog owners a reliable, safe, and sanitary place for their dogs to play, they may be less inclined to run their dogs in the adjacent athletic fields which are used regularly by local youth sports leagues and community groups.

The Commission also requests funding be dedicated to replace the playground surface at Sherwood Recreation Center. The playground is heavily used by our community's large number of children as well as the children who attend the adjacent DC Public School. Unfortunately, the surface is in bad disrepair with many areas where it has developed significant holes and crevices. The Commission recommends the completion of a complete resurfacing this year. Rosedale Playground and the Rosedale Recreation Center Complex are also in need of additional maintenance and repair.

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



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Thank you for your consideration of this request and for giving great weight to the recommendations of ANC 6A. We applaud the commitment of DPR leadership to improving our parks. Should you wish to discuss this letter with the Commission, please feel free to reach out to me at 6A04@anc.dc.gov.

On behalf of the Commission,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amber K. Gove".

Amber Gove
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

cc: Councilmember Charles Allen, DPR Director Delano Hunter

Testimony to the Performance Oversight Hearing:
Committee on Recreation, Libraries & Youth Affairs
January 27, 2022

Submitted by Amber Gove, ANC6A04 and Laura Gentile ANC6A05

<https://dccouncil.us/event/performance-oversight-hearing-committee-on-recreation-libraries-youth-affairs-8/>

Good afternoon Committee Chair White and Councilmembers,

As Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners in Ward 6, we regularly receive requests for and complaints regarding the maintenance of the many DPR-managed parks, including federally-owned reservations (triangle parks) within our Commission boundaries. We share several concerns and recommendations in this testimony in the hopes that our observations and experience might be helpful in improving DC Parks and Recreational spaces, which have become ever so much more important to all of us during the pandemic.

The case of Kingsman Field and Dog Park, located in the 1300 block of D Street NE, is a good illustration of the lack of routine maintenance that can result in the erosion of the quality of recent investments. Kingsman Dog Park was one of the first official DC dog parks. Since its installation a decade ago, it has received sporadic improvements from DGS. Despite numerous reports via 311 and DGS, as well as DPR contacts, the dog park suffers from broken water fountains and trash receptacles, dead and dying trees, and persistent drainage issues. Mud throughout the year and ice in winter make exercising dogs a messy affair.

As an alternative, many dog owners are instead using the adjacent athletic fields to exercise their dogs. We have observed upwards of 15-20 dogs on the recently upgraded grass fields. While we are grateful for the beautiful new fields, which received some \$400,000 in upgrades according to a recent communication DPR Director Christopher Dyer, we are concerned that this investment will be quickly eroded by poor maintenance and daily use by dozens of dogs. We urgently request clarity on the path forward to investment and maintenance in the dog park, as well as improvements to signage and fencing at the athletic fields to better indicate to dog owners that dogs are prohibited on the athletic fields. In the short term we recommend additional signage at the north and east entrances to the fields and installation of gates at each entrance. In the medium term we request maintenance and capital improvements to the dog park, including artificial turf, to make it a more attractive alternative to dog owners so they will avoid using the athletic fields. We would also welcome the addition of lighting to improve public safety for all users.

As an appendix to this testimony, we include recent photographs of the fields and dog park for your reference.

In addition, we make the following general recommendations:

1. There is a lack of clarity on how maintenance requests and repairs should be addressed and by whom. DGS is sometimes responsible for repairs and has a separate process from the DC311 system, making the submission process opaque and difficult for residents or Commissioners seeking repairs of our parks. We recommend fully integrating all maintenance and urgent requests into the 311 system.
2. For capital improvement projects, we ask that DPR and DGS hold contractors accountable for maintenance and warranty of the installation for at least two years and ensure there is a clear handover of responsibility and instructions for maintenance. The fields at Kingsman were installed with irrigation, but the irrigation was overly used, then under used, resulting in flooding and loss of the newly installed turf. It is unclear if the turf will recover from the recent hot summer, when sprinklers were inexplicably not turned on during the hottest months of the year. Who is accountable for this loss? How should residents report their concerns?
3. Triangle parks regularly go unmowed for weeks, while DC agencies work to sort out who is responsible for mowing. Many of our local parks have cracked sidewalks and broken benches, yet 311 requests for repair get closed without action. The patchwork of federally owned (NPS) land that is managed by DPW for mowing, and referrals to DGS (via DPR?) for capital projects or other investment means that even a relatively experienced resident can get lost and give up on getting attention to their local park. We recommend improved communication for each park parcel within DC as to who is responsible for its upkeep and which agency can be contacted. The addition of signage at the park including guidance on which agency to contact would be helpful to improving communication.
4. The ability of a few informed residents and Commissioners, acting as “squeaky wheels”, to obtain services for “their” parks should not be the primary way by which parks are maintained and serviced--yet it seems to us that that is the primary way in which work gets completed. We would appreciate greater transparency as to how and when parks are serviced, repaired and maintained, and when parks are eligible for capital improvements. Transparency would also help to improve equity. As we are well aware, we are privileged to have a dog park in our Commission area, a benefit that has not yet come to Wards 7 or 8. Great, safe and well-maintained parks and public spaces should be a right and benefit to all DC residents.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations and observations. We applaud the commitment of DPR leadership to improving our parks and we seek greater transparency and better communication as to how, when and by whom these treasured public resources can and should be maintained and repaired when needed.















