

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



September 19, 2023

Ms. Thennie Freeman
Director
DC Department of Parks and Recreation
1275 First Street, NE, 8th floor
Washington, DC

Dear Director Freeman:

I am writing on behalf of ANC 3A concerning the proposed agreement with an external organization regarding the renovation of the soccer field at Hearst Park. As you know DPR spent more than \$15 million dollars on a total renovation of this 3.4-acre neighborhood park that was finished in May 2022. Improvements included adding a popular outdoor pool, renovating the tennis courts, attempting to address longstanding drainage issues and regrading and resodding the soccer field.

We encourage and appreciate DPR's efforts to improve our local parks and recreational areas, but it is also vital that such important decisions are made transparently and inclusively. The soccer field at Hearst Park is an important part of our community, serving as a common ground for a variety of youth and adult leagues, other community activities and gatherings.

Before any commitment to an agreement that may grant guaranteed access to DPR facilities for an organization other than DPR, other local government programs, or the public, it is necessary that the community's voice is heard. ANC 3A believes that any changes to the current accessibility and use of the field should be made with full consideration of those who currently use it or live and work nearby where their own lives will be affected. By involving the community in these decisions, DPR can ensure that any improvements or changes align with the needs and wishes of the residents.

Further, ANC 3A requests that DPR provide the community with information about what established procedures they have in place to evaluate unsolicited proposals to obtain guaranteed access in exchange for payments to the District. Additionally, ANC 3A requests that DPR provide a firm timeline for how long the ANC and the community will have for review and community input after the details of any priority access proposal are provided to the community.

We understand that partnerships with private organizations can bring about beneficial outcomes for public spaces. Still, the success of such ventures significantly depends on the active involvement and endorsement of the community.

The Commission hopes to continue working with DPR to give priority to the interests and well-being of the community in its decisions regarding the soccer field at Hearst Park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis', written in a cursive style.

Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis
Chair

This letter was approved by the Commission by a vote of 5 - 0 at a duly-noticed public meeting on September 19, 2023, at which a quorum was participating. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.)