



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

May 19, 2023

Delano Hunter
Acting Director, Department of General Services
2000 14th Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

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

Dear Acting Director Hunter and Interim Director Freeman:

We write to request a written explanation for the recent closures of the Wilson and Marie Reed Aquatic Centers. The Department of General Services (“DGS”) has maintenance responsibilities for both facilities while day-to-day operations are managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation (“DPR”). In addition to a full accounting for what led to each facility’s untimely closure, we request that DPR institute compensatory aquatic options for residents impacted by these closures. This should include opening aquatic facilities with extended operating hours as soon as possible.

The Wilson Aquatic Center, located in Ward 3, was closed on February 14th following DC Health’s discovery of nine critical violations and four noncritical violations. DC Health’s inspector issued a summary suspension order for “operating an aquatic facility with improper temperatures and not maintaining the facility in good condition by repairing structural or design defects.” Included in these findings were problems with the facility’s HVAC exhaust ventilation system. Council staff visited and observed extremely high humidity levels. Components appeared corroded beyond repair, suggesting minimal or inadequate ongoing preventive maintenance prior to the system’s failure. DGS installed temporary portable fans earlier this spring, but those were later ordered removed by DC Health and Department of Buildings (“DOB”) due to safety concerns. Earlier this month, DGS reported to our offices that the additional temporary fans have failed to reduce the indoor humidity problems, and that the facility now appears unusable until long-term repairs are completed, which could take several more months for procurement and installation.

The Marie Reed Aquatic Center, located in Ward 1, was closed earlier this week to address water filtration system issues. These issues were first brought to our attention by a resident, which we then relayed to DGS and DPR. In addition to these issues, we are also aware of several pieces of broken equipment in the men’s and women’s locker rooms impacting residents’ use of the facility. DGS is aware of these issues and has opened work orders to address them through the normal work order process. It appears that DGS

and DPR may have been unaware of these issues (both the water filtration and the locker room problems) until the Council inquired on behalf of residents.

Please address the following requests related to each facility by Wednesday, May 31st:

- Share a copy of all recent DC Health and Department of Buildings inspection reports;
- Share a detailed accounting for why each facility was closed to the public, including which component systems failed and the current status of their repairs or replacement;
- Outline DGS and DPR's current preventive maintenance and basic upkeep protocols for indoor aquatic facilities including number of staff responsible for monitoring each facility;
- Share an update on procuring a new HVAC unit for the Wilson Aquatic Center; and
- Share an estimated completion date (ECD) for long-term repairs and reopening of each facility.

Additionally, we request that DPR provide compensatory aquatics options to residents impacted by these closures. DPR should open its outdoor aquatic facilities with expanded hours to facilitate early morning and weekday access expeditiously, prior to June 26th. Facilities with expanded hours should include the Hearst Pool in Ward 3; the Banneker Pool in Ward 1; and the Takoma Aquatic Center or Roosevelt High School in Ward 4. DPR should also pursue partnering with the University of the District of Columbia to secure additional aquatic facility access for the duration of the Wilson Aquatic Center closure. Given the already lengthy shutdown of the Wilson Aquatic Center this spring, there should be ample funding available in DPR's operating budget for these expenses.

We thank you again for your partnership and attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



Janeese Lewis George
Ward 4 Councilmember
Chairperson, Committee on Facilities and
Family Services



Trayon White, Sr.
Ward 8 Councilmember
Chairperson, Committee on Recreation,
Libraries and Youth Affairs



Brianne K. Nadeau
Ward 1 Councilmember
Chairperson, Committee on Public Works and
Operations



Matthew Frumin
Ward 3 Councilmember
Member, Committee on Facilities and Family
Services

CC:

Phil Mendelson, Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia
Tommy Wells, Director, Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs (OPLA)