



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

Representing the communities of Burleith, Georgetown, and Hillandale

3265 S Street, NW • Washington, DC 20007
(484) 885-8814 • 2E@anc.dc.gov

February 10, 2025

Director Thennie Freeman
DC Department of Parks and Recreation
1275 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
thennie.freeman@dc.gov

RE: Community Engagement Process for the Jelleff Recreation Center Design

Dear Director Freeman,

On February 3, 2025 ANC 2E held its regularly scheduled public meeting, which was properly noticed and attended by eight commissioners, constituting a quorum. At this meeting the Commission adopted the following resolution by a vote of (8-0-0) with regard to the above-referenced matter:

For the past year, in the spirit of continued engagement and partnership with DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), ANC 2E Commissioners repeatedly requested updated renderings from DPR for the new Jelleff Recreation Center. ANC 2E requested such as DPR was, to our understanding, preparing to engage in the concept review phase with the Old Georgetown Board (OGB) and DPR would want community input.

Prior to this detailed design phase, ANC 2E and our community worked with DPR to outline the key activities, resources, and design attributes that were wanted for the new Jelleff Center based on community input. ANC 2E appreciates the intended functions of the building and the direction of the design, however, transparency and collaboration has been a challenge.

Experience: Recent Community Engagement and Transparency Regarding Design

In the last six months ANC 2E and community stakeholders requested further information on the design stage in writing to DPR. They were acknowledged by DPR to have been received, but otherwise no further responses were given. The only OGB notices that ANC 2E received regarding Jelleff over the past six months were labelled as "**demolition**" meaning "demolition" of the building, not the proposed next step of the design for the new building.

Then, in January 2025, the ANC and community stakeholders learned that DPR's design team and the OGB met three times since May 2024 to finalize a concept review. It should be noted that:

COMMISSIONERS:

Kishan Putta, District 1	Topher Mathews, District 2	Paul Maysak, District 3
Peter Sloniewsky, District 4	Mimsy Lindner, District 5	Gwendolyn Lohse, District 6
Daniel Chao, District 7	Knox Graham, District 8	

- The updated design plans were not shared (with ANC or CAG) on the public OGB /HPO website.
- The updated plans were not shared on the public calls DPR began having in 2024 to provide status by Ward on DPR "Capital Construction" projects, including Jelleff; these calls are one-hour and review the status of up to 15+ projects.
- The updated plans were not posted on the DGS /DPR website devoted solely to updating the public on the status of the new Jelleff Center; the most recent updates are from May 2024.

Thus, ANC 2E or other community organizations did not get the opportunity to comment on the recent design step as we typically would have because renderings were not made available via the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) portal by this applicant, which is required by ALL applicants, or other avenues.

Request #1: More Accountability on Community Engagement and Transparency

Based on our experience over the last six months, ANC 2E asks that moving forward, all updated designs be publicly posted within a reasonable timeframe of more than two weeks and notifications are issued. As of today, for example, the last update on the website DGS/DPR devoted to Jelleff is May 2024. ANC 2E wishes to extend our appreciation to the staff of the OGB for sharing the most recent renderings dated (October 17, 2024) and information of the discussions to date for the new Jelleff center. ANC 2E has requested that DPR present at an ANC 2E meeting on the progress they are making on the Jelleff design thus far. Jelleff is a \$28 million dollar capital project and ANC 2E strongly believes community engagement is critical to a successful end product. This said, if DPR/DGS no longer has the ability to receive public input on design, ANC 2E asks to be informed of such, and no matter what, all design updates should be made publicly available.

Request #2: Specifics Related to the Proposed Jelleff Design

As DPR moves forward on the concept review phase with OGB, ANC 2E wishes to encourage a thoughtful discussion on the S Street entrance as it pertains to not only those who arrive in automobiles but also those who arrive on foot. Please do not overlook signage options at the S Street entrance to alert and inform visitors of this structure that is recessed over hundreds of feet back from its S street entrance. We also welcome a robust discussion on how pedestrian users would have a pleasant and welcoming walk path from S Street to the main entrance and where plants, shrubs and trees can be incorporated as well as where shade from extreme weather elements can be provided.

Although the north side of the building functions as the rear of the community center, we urge DPR and OGB to consider that this façade facing the Safeway building should be treated as visually significant as the building's main entrance because it is viewed by thousands of visitors who walk and drive to the grocery store weekly. We also wish to flag that the aerial view in the renderings does not show the planned residences at the corner of S and Wisconsin (1805 Wisconsin NW) but the existing footprint and massing of a soon to be razed building. And we encourage that a new rendering that incorporates the new development's footprint be used in future discussions.

ANC 2E wishes to share additional comments from the Citizens Association of Georgetown (CAG) on the concept designs that are enclosed. ANC 2E respectfully requests DPR and OGB consider these comments as you move forward with your engagement to finalize the concept designs.

We thank you for your work thus far on this critical community center, which will be treasured by many for decades to come.

Commissioners Chao and Lohse are the Commission's representatives in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gwendolyn Lohse", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Gwendolyn Lohse
Chair, ANC 2E

CC: Brooke Pinto, Ward 2 Councilmember

Brian Romanowski, Director of Constituent Services, Councilmember Brooke Pinto

Mary Catherine Bogard, Historic Preservation Specialist, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

Daniel Fox, Historic Preservation Specialist, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

Tommie L. Jones, Jr., Chief of External Affairs, DC Department of Parks and Recreation

Peter Nohrden, Project Manager, DC Department of Parks and Recreation

Sean Garganio, Project Manager, DC Department of General Services

Brittany Hughes, Director of Community Outreach, DC Department of General Services

Paul Williams, President, Citizens Association of Georgetown

Brittany Sawyer, Executive Director, Citizens Association of Georgetown