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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1A

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

September 12, 2023

Delano Hunter
Acting Director
Department of General Services
2000 14th St., NW 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009

Re: ANC Recommendations in Response to August 1, 2023, DGS Notice of Intent for the Acquisition of Leasehold Interest in Real Property at 1100 Park Road, N.W.

Dear Acting Director Hunter,

On behalf of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A ("Commission"), I am writing to endorse the leasehold acquisition proposal for the Columbia Heights Dog Park ("CHDP"), as outlined and submitted by the Department of General Services ("DGS"), as the representative of the single-member district where the CHDP is situated. As a dog owner who regularly utilizes this dog park, I firmly believe that establishing an official Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR") managed dog park at this site would be a significant and beneficial addition to the neighborhood and Ward 1.

Columbia Heights is renowned for its diversity and strong sense of community, where recreational opportunities and social cohesion are highly valued. Creating an official dog park at the proposed location aligns perfectly with our neighborhood's character and the Commission's vision for enhancing the quality of life in the area. We have witnessed the positive outcomes experienced in other District communities with the addition of dog parks, fostering a sense of unity among dog owners and contributing to the overall well-being of the residents. By providing a dedicated and secure space for residents to exercise and socialize their dogs, the CHDP will encourage responsible pet ownership and minimize potential conflicts that may arise in other public parks.

Moreover, we have seen firsthand how a well-maintained dog park can serve as a catalyst for community engagement and volunteerism, exemplified by the remarkable efforts of the Friends of the Columbia Heights Dog Park, known as 11th and Bark. The Commission took into account the invaluable insights gathered through a survey conducted by the 11th and Bark board of directors, which represents the collective voice of approximately 64 residents who frequently use the dog park. We have also



reviewed the survey results and the comprehensive letter submitted by the 11th and Bark board, enclosed with this letter.

Upon careful examination of the survey findings and the board's recommendations, the Commission wishes to express the following key recommendations:

1. **Entrance Accessibility:** Regarding foot traffic and vehicle and bicycle traffic flow around the dog park, the Commission finds no significant concerns. As noted in the survey responses and from what I have heard from numerous residents who utilize the dog park, at least two public entrances should be installed, with one or both access points having a double gate entry. These features are covered by current design standards outlined by DPR for fencing around a dog park. However, the design standards note that "[t]he second dog park entrance shall be for maintenance purposes only and will be controlled by DPR." The Commission recommends including an additional public access point to accommodate the expressed needs of dog park users.
2. **WMATA Maintenance Access:** For access to the area that will remain under the control of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority ("WMATA"), the Commission asks that DGS request, in writing, assurances from WMATA regarding maintenance access adjacent to the suggested square footage of the dog park as defined in the notice and rendering. When possible, the Commission asks that WMATA inform the commissioner for the single-member district where the dog park is sited of work to be completed and whether it will significantly interrupt the use, enjoyment, and safety of the dog park.
3. **Square Footage Enhancement:** Relatedly, the Commission is concerned with the dog park's suggested square footage based on community members' feedback. Over 50 residents expressed concern about the proposed square footage of the dog park based on the rendering. In contrast, several others expressed no concern provided that certain areas of the suggested square footage are enhanced to maximize the space. One of the key benefits of maintaining a larger footprint of the dog park would allow for designated small and large dog areas to be created. While the Commission does not wish to extend or delay lease negotiations or signing, the Commission does request that DGS clarify whether additional square footage can be added to extend the dog park to the property line on the Park Street side without impacting WMATA's access or the ability to provide a designated parking spot for maintenance vehicles.
4. **Sound and Lighting:** The Commission has never received significant complaints regarding sound from the park, and we do not believe sound levels will increase when the dog park is completed. Regarding lighting, the Commission recommends that DGS identify locations within the dog park to place four to six LED field lights. Based on funding considerations, the Commission recommends that DGS install a solar lighting system or consider solar canopies that can double as shelters for dog park users during extreme weather days. The Commission



DGS Acting Director Hunter
ANC Recommendations regarding Notice of Intent for the Acquisition
of Leasehold Interest in Real Property at 1100 Park Road, N.W.
September 6, 2023

Page 3

also requests that DGS takes the appropriate steps to mitigate any light pollution into multi-family dwellings that abut the dog park.

In conclusion, the Commission fully supports the intent to secure a leasehold interest for the Columbia Heights Dog Park site. We are convinced this dog park will align seamlessly with our community's values and fulfill our pressing need for this space. After years of dedicated community advocacy, we are eager to witness the realization of this project, which promises to have a profoundly positive impact on our neighborhood.

Should you require further assistance or collaboration on this acquisition, please do not hesitate to contact me at 1A06@anc.dc.gov or 202-855-8550. We extend our sincere gratitude for your attention to this matter and eagerly anticipate the transformative influence the Columbia Heights Dog Park will bring to our community upon its completion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony J. E. Thomas-Davis".

Anthony Thomas-Davis
Commissioner, Single Member District 1A06

Cc: Ward 1 Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau
Executive Director Kent Boese, Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions
Maggie Garrett, Board President, 11th and Bark