



UPPER EAST SIDE BATTERY PARK CITY
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asphaltgreen.org

**TESTIMONY BEFORE
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON PARKS & RECREATION**

**OVERSIGHT – IMPROVING ACCESS TO NYC PARKS
RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021

PREPARED BY
DAVID LUDWIG
SENIOR DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
ASPHALT GREEN

Good afternoon Chair Koo. My name is David Ludwig and I serve as Senior Director of Community Programs & Governmental Affairs for Asphalt Green. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Committee on Parks & Recreation on access to recreational programs and facilities.

INTRODUCTION

Asphalt Green is a nonprofit organization committed to providing access to sports and fitness opportunities for all New Yorkers. As a nonprofit, we foster a love for physical activity in underserved areas. Our programs—including sports leagues, swim lessons, and active recess—help children develop physically, emotionally, and socially. We believe positive experiences in sports and fitness lead young people to develop skills and habits that will help them lead healthy, active lives as adults.

Asphalt Green manages a multi-million budget with 500+ employees across our two campuses. Our members help support our community programs, which allows us to provide free services and scholarships to New Yorkers in need. And, we have been fortunate to have a wonderful working relationship with NYC Parks & Recreation, with an original agreement dating back to 1989 and renewed in 2011.

Asphalt Green manages two campuses in Manhattan, which include world-class aquatics, sports, and fitness programs:

- Our flagship campus at East 90th Street features the historic George and Annette Murphy Center with an indoor soccer turf, theater, and fitness spaces; AquaCenter, which houses our Olympic-sized 50-meter pool and duplex fitness center, and a 90,000 square foot, state-of-the art, outdoor turf field



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- Since 2013 our second campus in Battery Park City opened with a 25-yard indoor lap pool, full-service fitness center, and a gymnasium equipped for basketball, volleyball, soccer, and more.

At our two campuses, Asphalt Green hosts summer day camps, swim camp, soccer camp, swim classes, diving, water polo, a range of indoor and outdoor sports (basketball, baseball, flag football, martial arts, soccer, tennis), fitness programming (spin, Pilates, yoga, stretching), and much more.

OUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Asphalt Green is committed to improving the health and fitness of all New Yorkers, regardless of age, ability, and economics. That is why we operate a variety of programs that allow those who might not have such experiences to share in the joy and benefits of sports, aquatics, and fitness. We call these our Community Programs.

Our Community Programs help children develop positive attitudes toward being active through play and sports. We strive to instill healthy habits in each child. Our core community programs for kids are:

- **Waterproofing:** Asphalt Green's free swim instruction and water safety program for New York City public school students that teaches a survival skill while instilling a lifelong fitness habit. Since 1994, over 35,000 second-graders have learned to swim through Waterproofing. This program provides each participant with over 20 hours of group swim instruction on a weekly basis throughout the school year. Teachers report a correlation between Waterproofing and both better grades and behavior in the classroom. Children who participate in Waterproofing learn confidence and perseverance, and leave with an essential life skill.
- **Recess Enhancement Program (REP):** REP addresses barriers to physical activity by reclaiming the most underutilized part of the school day — recess! Asphalt Green partners with New York City public elementary schools to provide over 10,000 students physical activity programs during lunch and recess periods. Asphalt Green trains play coaches to get children physically active through over 150 organized games that decrease conflict and increase self-esteem, safety, and fun. Experts recommend that children should be physically active 60 minutes a day with 30 of those minutes occurring during school hours. REP fulfills the majority of the daily youth physical activity guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- **Community Sports Leagues:** Asphalt Green provides approximately 500 middle school children from low-income neighborhoods access to organized sports like flag football, basketball, and soccer. In the past decade, over 20,000 kids from New York City schools have played in Asphalt Green's Community Sports Leagues. Asphalt Green partners with schools in



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low-income neighborhoods that have limited access to organized sports. We administer the league at a low cost to schools and provide participants with free uniforms, professional referees, equipment, and instructional clinics with our coaches. The Community Sports League curriculum mirrors that of our recreational and competitive teams. Community Sports Leagues teach lifelong lessons in leadership, self-esteem, teamwork, and confidence. Kids learn how to balance academics and athletics.

- **Scholarships:** This fiscal year, Asphalt Green provides \$430,000 in scholarships to our sports, aquatics, and camp programs. Our goal is to make our high-quality programs available to as many children as possible. Our scholarships include:
 - **Summer Day Camp scholarships:** for more than two decades Asphalt Green Summer Day Camp scholarships have brought children from all over New York City to our campus to play outside, make new friends and develop physical, emotional, and social skills that stay with them for a lifetime.
 - **Asphalt Green Soccer Club Scholarships:** provide opportunity to exceptional athletes of all backgrounds, we offer scholarships to Asphalt Green players with financial need. Recipients must be a current or newly selected member of an Asphalt Green team. Our Asphalt Green Scholarship has helped make our youth sports teams among the most diverse in the country.
 - **Swim for the Future scholarships:** Asphalt Green Unified Aquatics (AGUA) Swim Team is one of the most diverse youth swim teams in the country. This is due in part to the Swim for the Future Scholarship, which gives children with financial need a chance to pursue the dream of competitive swimming.

Since 2001, 381 scholarships have been awarded to deserving swimmers on the AGUA Swim Team.

Over the years, Swim for the Future Scholarship recipients have excelled in the swimming world at regional, national, and international competitions while breaking personal, team, and national age group records, with one swimmer medaling at the Tokyo Olympics.

Asphalt Green is committed to New York City's elderly population with our senior-focused programming:

- **Senior Fitness:** Asphalt Green provides opportunities for 100 seniors to get fit and active each year through free memberships f.



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COVID-19 AND ASPHALT GREEN

The world needs sports and fitness now more than ever. The Aspen Institute recently released physical activity trends during the pandemic and found youth of all ages are half as active as they were prior to the pandemic.

COVID-19 has significantly changed the way we operate and forced us to think about ways to get essential physical activity in a socially distant world. Some ways we have pivoted include:

- We transformed our Recess Enhancement Program (REP) to create games that promote physical activity while social distancing. The resource has global impact and has been viewed in over 170 countries.
- Our competitive sports teams practiced on Zoom.
- We dedicated our social media channels to providing tips for adults and families to stay active, ran free group exercise classes on Instagram, and offered group exercise classes and personal training virtually.
- After about six months, we were able to meet in person again in small groups with social distancing and safety measures in place.

Physical activity is correlated with academic achievement, reduced stress and anxiety, and higher self-esteem. The shift to virtual learning left few opportunities during the school day for physical activity and social connections for kids. We are providing resources for educators and families during this challenging time.

THE WORK AHEAD

As New York City emerges from the pandemic, Asphalt Green's vision is to rebuild our community impact to pre-pandemic levels, and beyond. As schools transition back to full in-person teaching, and COVID protocols allow for more direct service and in-person programming during and after school, Asphalt Green will be working with our community partners and the NYC Department of Education to further engage with schools and expand our work in the upcoming school years.

Asphalt Green is excited by the possibility of providing world-class athletic programming in parks across the entire city. As the next Mayoral administration takes shape, we'll be talking with our partners at NYC Parks & Recreation to determine how and where Asphalt Green can make the most impact in the neediest communities.



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And we'll continue to work with the Council and individual Council Members to deepen our impact and expand our work across New York City.

CONCLUSION

Asphalt Green looks forward to continuing our commitment to New York City's neighborhoods, youth, and seniors, and growing our relationship with NYC Parks and New York City Council. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about Asphalt Green's work.

December 7, 2021

Dear Committee,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a vital community resource. While the Rec Center is not filled as it was pre-pandemic days, those who do use it most are elderly residents of the houses who have shared they will not be able to get over to Sunset Park. This will close off their only reliable, affordable way to exercise daily in Red Hook, particularly now that the track has closed down for the remission project.

From our understanding, the sole reason behind the closure is that the boiler has not been working since Hurricane Ida, and they have no heat or hot water at the facility. Staff members have been reassigned to Sunset Park Rec Center "indefinitely", and the facility will not be used for COVID-19 testing/vaccinations or anything. There is concern it will be hard to get the facility to reopen once closed.

Red Hook Art Project was just about to launch after school programming at the Rec Center as well. Both seniors and the children are the groups who will be most impacted by the closure-all due to a boiler.

I work at the school down the block from the Rec Center, and last week we asked all of our school staff to reach out to NYC Parks and Rec to voice opposition to the closure. Today we wanted to make sure you knew why it was important to reopen as soon as possible. Red Hook is often overlooked and underserved, and it is our great hope the city can fix a boiler to help keep a resource open that will keep seniors healthy and allow needed programming to continue for the neighborhood.

Take care,
Jo Goldfarb



New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation
Tuesday, December 7, 2021
Oversight Hearing – Recreation Centers
Sherrise Palomino, Director of Advocacy and Programs

Good afternoon, my name is Sherrise Palomino, and I am the Director of Advocacy and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). We are a founding member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation for inviting us to speak about our city's recreation opportunities and centers. I also want to thank Chair Koo for his leadership and partnership in the Play Fair Coalition and for raising these important issues.

The NYC Parks Department operates and maintains 59 recreation centers across a city to serve a population of over 8 million people. Of the 59 community board districts, 26 don't have a NYC Parks recreation center within, meaning that 44% of community boards do not have a recreation center. NYC's recreation centers used to serve as community centers with programs for youth and seniors alike. Unfortunately, NYC's network of recreation centers never recovered from the steep cuts to the Parks Department in the 1970s and '80s. They should provide critical opportunities for youth development and empowerment with free programming and sports, and they should provide older adults opportunities to socialize and be active, which is essential to their overall well-being. Instead, NYC's recreation centers are chronically under-staffed and badly in need of repairs, with roughly one third of them closed at any given time.

The time for now for transformative investment in our parks system – 1% of the city budget for parks could ensure that recreation centers are fully staffed and functioning to provide the programming that New Yorkers need. The NYC Parks department does a valiant job maintaining these aging resources but needs more funding to do so. This is one of the many reasons why NY4P and the Play Fair for Parks Coalition are calling for an increase in the Parks budget to 1% of the city's budget – a call that the majority of City Council Members support along with the incoming Mayor.

For over 100 years, [New Yorkers for Parks](http://www.ny4p.org) (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. www.ny4p.org

Red Hook Rec Center Testimony

My name is Sarah Nolan, I am a supervising attorney at the New York Legal Assistance Group, providing free legal services to low income New Yorkers. I have lived in South Brooklyn since 2005. My family and I have enjoyed swimming at the Red Hook pool and can't imagine being in New York in the summer heat and humidity without it.

Every time we go, the pool is full of residents of the neighborhood of all ages. Little children run and cool off in the baby pool section, older kids and teenagers are splashing around and having a blast in the big pool. The lap lane section is also always full of swimmers getting some exercise and lounging in the sun on the chairs (which were a welcome addition when they were added some years ago). Everyone enjoys an ice cream outside after their swim.

The Red Hook community relies on the rec center and pool to provide healthy and safe places for young people to go, and there are no other centers anywhere nearby that could fill the void if it were not re-opened. The communities of South Brooklyn are too often overlooked when it comes to funding for parks, road repairs and other community projects. We have been asked to live with incessant commercial development that without question degrades the quality of life in the neighborhood. Enough is enough – it is a matter of racial equity to provide the funding needed to re-open the Red Hook Rec Center.

Thank you for your consideration.

12/7/21

Re: Council Oversight Hearing: Access to Recreational Programs
Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 1 PM,

We learned of this hearing on short notice from a community member, so this is rushed.

The boiler in the Red Hook Rec Center must be repaired. The Rec Center is a vital resource in an underserved community in general, and even more so since many of Red Hook's outdoor spaces have become unusable with lead remediation in Parks ballfields and all of NYCHA's outdoor space torn up for a post-Sandy resiliency project.

Further, the idea that it was damaged by hurricane Ida is surprising; why was this not made flood-proof after Sandy.

Lastly, the sidewalk toilet to serve Valentino Park should FINALLY be installed. THIS WAS APPROVED IN 2018!

See our blogpost <https://portsidenewyork.org/portsidetanke/2014/9/25/red-hooks-valentino-park-community-meeting-about-the-comfort-station-matter>

Use of tiny, beloved Valentino Park has soared in the pandemic.

The last reason for the delay was about an issue matching the original fence, and inexcusable reason. Copying from our blogpost:

From: Frumin, Rachel [<mailto:rfrumin@dot.nyc.gov>]

Sent: Monday, July 01, 2019 11:31 AM

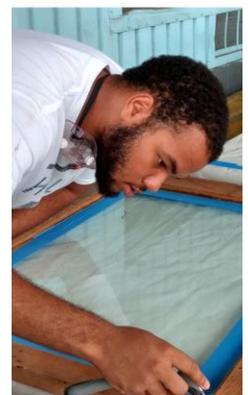
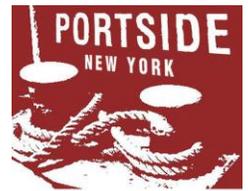
To: Budelman, Brandon; Carolina Salguero

Cc: Branch, Leroy; Widdison, Renae; Craven, Michelle

Subject: RE: PortSide NewYork request to put info on Valentino Park Street toilet

Hi all,

PortSide NewYork, aboard the tanker MARY A. WHALEN
190 Pioneer Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231
917-414-0565, chiclet@portsidenewyork.org
www.portsidenewyork.org. www.redhookwaterstories.org



The approved project is delayed due to DEP issues that requested an agreement letter between DOT and Parks on the site plan. That is in process. Also, the existing fence is not a standard one that we can easily procure. Instead, the fence is custom that was commissioned by EDC. To move the fence to accommodate an APT require reconfiguration of the fence work to maintain the flow of the curvy lines in the middle as well as to find a fabricator to build and install the fence. I'm working on this and it is taking some time.

Rachel

Rachel Frumin
Director of Concessions and Franchises
NYC Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041
rfrumin@dot.nyc.gov
646-586-5787

We followed up and said that we could introduce them to lots of local metal fabricators who could replicate the fence, or make new. Resounding silence since. We are sure users of the park care more about getting a toilet than having the fence section match - though surely the amazing artisans of Red Hook could match the original fence.

Red Hook deserves a boiler in the Rec Center and a toilet in Valentino Park!

Sincerely,

Carolina Salguero
Executive Director
PortSide NewYork

PortSide NewYork, aboard the tanker MARY A. WHALEN
P.O. Box 195, Brooklyn, NY 11231, 917-414-0565, chiclet@portsidenewyork.org,
www.portsidenewyork.org. www.redhookwaterstories.org

Victoria Alexander, resident of Council District 38

Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation

Tuesday, December 7th, 1:00PM EST

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a staple in our community. As a fitness center, public pool, and programming space, the Rec Center is used, loved, and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. It's also loved by surrounding neighborhoods once summer time starts and it transforms into the extremely popular outdoor pool.

Being healthy and active doesn't come cheap. Many gym memberships and fitness classes can be very pricey and an investment that many households can't afford- especially coming out of the pandemic. Having an affordable resource like the Red Hook Recreation center is extremely valuable in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. Especially with the city membership deal going on right now where you can sign up for a free year-long membership, this is something our neighborhood desperately needs now more than ever.

The residents of Red Hook constantly get taken advantage of by the city. In the past two years alone, we have had to endure the loss of 457+ trees in our neighborhood, an increase in asthma rates, high toxicity levels in our soil, the closure of our ballfields, and now several last-mile facilities being built that will bring over 7,000 trucks a day through our neighborhood, there are too many issues affecting our quality of living and choosing profit over people. With all of these factors limiting our outdoor recreation, it's important now more than ever to have a safe and large facility to exercise in.

We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming.

Sincerely,



Victoria Alexander

President of Realty Collective LLC

Founder of Red Hook Business Alliance

Carlos J Calzadilla, resident of Council District 38
Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation
Tuesday, December 7th, 1:00PM EST

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

As an active community member in Red Hook, I'm very concerned with the future of the Red Hook Recreational center. So many residents of Red Hook have relied on the Recreational Center and enjoyed everything it offers to our community.

The Recreational Center is a staple of the community and brings incredible happiness and essential programs for the most underprivileged families our city. Red Hook is a majority black and brown neighborhood home to the largest public housing development in Brooklyn. Our neighborhood is often forgotten and marginalized and suffers from continual disinvestment. At this difficult time for our neighborhood, we can't afford to lose such a valuable part of our neighborhood.

I urge the city to fund the repair of the boiler that was damaged from the Hurricane Ida flood so our community can continue to enjoy the beloved Recreational Center.

Sincerely,

Carlos J Calzadilla

Co-Director of Red Hook Relief

Jacqui Painter, resident of Council District 38
Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation

Tuesday, December 7th, 1:00PM EST

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a staple in our community. As a fitness center, public pool, and programming space, the Rec Center is used and loved and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. It's even loved by surrounding neighborhoods as well once summer time starts and it transforms into the extremely popular outdoor pool.

Being healthy and active doesn't come cheap; many gym memberships and fitness classes can be very pricey and an investment that many households can't afford- especially coming out of the pandemic. Having an affordable resource like the Red Hook Recreation center is extremely valuable in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. Especially with the city membership deal going on right now where you can sign up for a free year-long membership, this is something our neighborhood desperately needs right now.

The residents of Red Hook constantly get taken advantage of by the city. In the past two years alone, we have had to endure the loss of 457 trees in our neighborhood, an increase in asthma rates, high toxicity levels in our soil, the closure of our ballfields, and now several last-mile facilities being built that will bring over 6,000 trucks a day through our neighborhood, there are too many issues affecting our quality of living and choosing profit over people. With all of these factors limiting our outdoor recreation, it's important now more than ever to have a safe and large facility to exercise in.

We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline (Jacqui) Painter
Founder of Red Hook Relief



December 10, 2021

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation:

Red Hook Recreation Center is a major asset to the community of Red Hook. It is communal space for young and old alike. It is the place where residents come together for recreation and holiday events, to use the weight room, play pickup games in the basketball gym, enjoy swimming in the summer months, and hang out in the lobby playing cards, pool, air hockey, and table tennis. After being closed for a year and half, residents were eagerly awaiting the full reopening of the facility to get back to these kinds of activities, but instead the building is closed once again to the public after being inaccessible for the past year and a half.

The closure of the recreation center due to a broken boiler is devastating to the community. Having a clean and safe space to socialize and exercise is important in a neighborhood buffeted by significant air and environmental pollution. Over the past few years residents have had to navigate the closure of the ballfields because of high lead in the soils, cement and other trucks that run back and forth on neighborhood streets, the loss of over 450+ trees on NYCHA properties, and the proliferation of Last Mile warehouses built or slated for the community which brings with it even more trucks and vans that's expected to run day and night.

As I write this letter the Red Hook Recreation Center is off-limits to the public. Recreation Center staff has been sent to other locations and the maintenance and operations park staff who are also housed in the building are biding their time until a decision is made about where they should go while continuing to work without heat or hot water. This is what neglect looks like. This is the result of short-sighted planning and investment in our community assets. It doesn't have to be this way. Communities like Red Hook are depending on council members and the mayor to step up and prioritize our recreation centers. Transformative investment in our park system would ensure fully functioning and staffed recreation centers for today and the future.

Sincerely,

Marlene Pantin
Executive Director
Red Hook Conservancy

Allyn Bacher, resident of Council District 38
Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation
December 8, 2021

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is highly valued and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. The pool and exercise facility offer a healthy activity for all — a very valuable asset, especially for those who can not afford a gym membership or the price of exercise classes—common in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook.

Red Hook has lost a lot in the past few years due to many factors, including the pandemic. Most of the ballfields are closed due to ongoing toxic soil mitigation. And now with the construction of several last-mile facilities bringing many more large trucks to the neighborhood leading to poorer air quality and limiting outdoor recreation, it is more important than ever to our health and quality of life, that the Rec Center remain open.

It is crucial that the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up.

Sincerely,

Allyn Bacher

Adrian Marin
424 Van Brunt Street, #2
Brooklyn, NY 11231
917.974.3555. mobile
718.855.5475. land
adrian@marinheadland.com

10 December 2021

New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation

Re: Red Hook Recreation Center, Red Hook, Brooklyn 11231

Dear Sir/Madame:

This letter is being submitted to the Committee on Parks and Recreation to say the neighborhood of Red Hook and the immediate surrounding area needs the Red Hook Recreation Center!

Please don't allow the closure of the Red Hook Recreation Center to be anything other than temporary until the necessary repairs are made.

For the dwindling lower-middle and middle classes here in Red Hook, the Recreation Center is an oasis of opportunity for self-preservation, self-improvement, and community engagement in an area unfortunately in danger of becoming more and more like West Greenwich Village—where formerly vibrant blocks now seem like deserts mainly occupied by those hiding-out with money and those scurrying about serving them.

Enough with multiple Amazon fulfillment centers; what's needed is human fulfillment. And I can think of no other better gem of a place to get that than the Red Hook Recreation Center. Please support and protect!

Sincerely,

P.S. Just about every person I've ever seen come out of the Red Hook Community Center is smiling.

I work and live in the Red Hook community. The Red Hook Rec Center is the primary resource in our community for health, exercise and community building. This center has programs for all but most importantly our kids. The pool, the fitness center and the programs are all used and needed by our community. It would be a tremendous loss for all of us if these programs and facilities close. I am writing to join in with others to request that the Red Hook Rec Center remain open to keep our community alive.

With a hopeful heart,

Alexa Bono

Dear Committee on Parks & Recreations,

As a resident of Red Hook, Brooklyn for the past 13 years I can attest to the importance the Red Hook Recreation Center has had in mine and my family's life.

We use the pool each summer and are always grateful for all the summer days when the heat index reaches high numbers to have the pool in the neighborhood. I have taken my daughter for swimming lessons, pool time, as well as participated in the morning and evening lap swims and exercise and wellness classes throughout the year.

The Red Hook Rec Center is a vital part of this community and instead of considering its closure the focus should be on raising funds to repair and upgrade the space to meet the needs of our diverse population. The Rec Center can contribute to so much more that can aid in the mission of diversity and inclusion in this small hamlet.

I was shocked after Hurricane Sandy that not much was done to upgrade the center. I think it's a good time to start much needed work and my hope is Red Hook Rec Center remains open.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alma Melendez', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Alma Melendez, Dikeman Street

Alyce Erdekian, resident of Council District 38

Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is an oasis and hub for all of Red Hook and the surrounding neighborhoods. The idea that there isn't funding to repair damage, and that this is only being found out and publicized for the community to respond to at the last minute seems like it's another cruel joke for the residents of Red Hook, especially the Red Hook Houses. Folks have been subjected to an onslaught of environmental and campus injuries since Hurricane Sandy. Red Hook is fenced off, piles of dirt everywhere, playgrounds and ballfields fenced off, trees removed, public spaces eroded, and very few gains ever realized. The public bathrooms in Coffey Park that have been promised for years have never materialized, and now a critical public space is threatened with closure, as we now deal with the onslaught of massive Last-Mile Warehouses and trucks coming into our neighborhood.

Please show the people of Red Hook that they are not a punching bag, and that you care about their well being. Find the money to fix the boiler so that another of our beloved neighborhood resources isn't taken away.

Please

Alyce Erdekian

12/10/21

To: NYC Committee on Parks and Recreation

Regarding: The Red Hook Recreation Center

Dear Members of the Parks and Recreation Committee,

Please Do All That You Can To Keep The Red Hook Recreation Center Operational and In Good Order

The Red Hook Recreation Center is critical to the well-being of the community of Red Hook, and other communities that benefit from it:

The Recreation Center provides an essential service:

- To those who cannot afford private gym membership.
- It gives critical respite from extreme summertime temperatures, a vital concern to the Red Hook community, and others.
- It serves as an essential point of coming together and overall community cohesion.

If Red Hook were to lose the Recreation Center – especially because of the maintenance cost of a boiler – it would seriously compound the already environmental and economic injustices the community of Red Hook faces. The consequences of this cannot be measured in dollars, though the resulting societal and economic cost to the city of New York would surely be more than the small repairs and maintenance currently required to make the facility operational.

Thank you for your kind consideration of these comments. I cannot stress enough the importance of keeping the Red Hook Recreation Center not only operational but in very good condition.

Sincerely,
Andrea Sansom
Red Hook resident.

Basia Grocholski, resident of Council District 38
Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation

Tuesday, December 7th, 1:00PM EST

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

I was dismayed to learn that The Red Hook Recreation Center may be closing indefinitely. The last two years during the pandemic have been tough on residents in Red Hook. We went through some major shifts here:

- rec center being closed / used as an official Covid testing site
- major construction on industrial warehouses that do not benefit residents
- traffic increase from other neighborhoods to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere in Red Hook
- most of our outdoor space be cordoned off for improvements

We now find out that the only local community space we have been waiting for to open up again for exercising and connecting with friends and neighbors may be unavailable during this winter and summer - possibly indefinitely?!

This is the only affordable resource in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. Especially with the city membership deal going on right now where you can sign up for a free year-long membership, this is something our neighborhood desperately needs now more than ever.

Please see that the city fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook needs this more than ever.

Sincerely,

Basia Grocholski / Owner of Venotto

Red Hook Rec Center

I work in Red Hook and live in Carroll Gardens and feel the Red Hook Rec Center is a staple in the community. The center has many programs for kids in the neighborhood that are not offered anywhere else. The pool and the fitness center are used by many and will continued to be used by the community. It would be very unfortunate for these programs and facilities to close. I am writing to you to join in with others to request that the Red Hook Rec Center stay open for the community.

Thank you.

Brian Bissinger

Keep the Red Hook Rec Center open

I believe with the passing of our Environmental Justice laws, there should be no moment in which something like the closing of the Red Hook Rec Center is able to be considered by the Committee. Red Hook Houses is an environmental justice area and any impact to quality of life must both be weighed heavily *and* considered in the context of everything else happening in the neighborhood – such as ongoing housing construction, closed park space due to polluted land, substantial loss of urban forest, and increase to noise, traffic, and pollution due to ever more new trucking facilities – to ensure an ever-*increasing* quality of life is created while prior harms are continuously mitigated. If you are unaware of any of the current circumstances impacting this neighborhood, please educate yourself about them before making this decision.

In this framework, the Red Hook Rec Center must not only be maintained but invested in further while other community resources are unavailable or being further diminished. The City has a responsibility to the health and wellbeing of its neighborhoods and especially to its environmental justice areas, and this requires decision-making, planning, and likely investment across agencies.

I'm sure on paper, in the Parks and Rec context, as a silo, closing the Red Hook Rec Center makes sense, but that framework is incapable of making sense in the contexts in which it matters – the environmental and quality of life outcomes in our neighborhoods. These are the outcomes you are accountable to via the scope of City government as a whole; it must be administered holistically.

I would urge you to go to the Task Force for Environmental Justice and request recommendations for the new kinds of seeing, planning, and budgeting needed to assist Parks in playing its collaborative role in creating wellness and high quality of life in our neighborhoods and especially our environmental justice areas using strong cross-agency vision. And, in the short term, look at this neighborhood and the critical role of Parks in it at this moment, and get the money you need to fix the boiler at the Rec Center.

Carly Baker-Rice

Cecilia Dean
Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation
Tuesday, December 9th, 2021

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a staple in our community. As a fitness center, public pool, and programming space, the Rec Center is used, loved, and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. It's also loved by surrounding neighborhoods once summer time starts and it transforms into the extremely popular outdoor pool.

Being healthy and active doesn't come cheap. Many gym memberships and fitness classes can be very pricey and an investment that many households can't afford- especially coming out of the pandemic. Having an affordable resource like the Red Hook Recreation center is extremely valuable in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. Especially with the city membership deal going on right now where you can sign up for a free year-long membership, this is something our neighborhood desperately needs now more than ever.

The residents of Red Hook constantly get taken advantage of by the city. In the past two years alone, we have had to endure the loss of 457+ trees in our neighborhood, an increase in asthma rates, high toxicity levels in our soil, the closure of our ballfields, and now several last-mile facilities being built that will bring over 7,000 trucks a day through our neighborhood, there are too many issues affecting our quality of living and choosing profit over people. With all of these factors limiting our outdoor recreation, it's important now more than ever to have a safe and large facility to exercise in.

We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cecilia Dean', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cecilia Dean

December 7, 2021

Dear City Council,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a cornerstone of our community, and it **MUST** be maintained. During the pandemic, my family was able to access quick, friendly and compassionate testing at the facility. It's where my kids learned to swim, an essential place to cool off during the hot summer days. We sometimes refer to it as the "Red Hook Country Club" as it gives our neighborhood - so often deprived of basic services - something to feel special about.

Please don't let the plague of deferred maintenance take our beloved Rec Center away!

Hopefully yours,

Tina Fallon

Coffey Street

Craig LaCourt
Dikeman Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231

December 10, 2021

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

I am writing to voice my concern over the news that the Red Hook Recreation Center will be closing based on needing some boiler repairs. I have been a former gym pass holder to the facility and also a frequent user of the public pool before the current pandemic. My wife and I have been taking our daughter to the pool facility since she was a toddler and our sitter had very often taken advantage of the pool day hours with the local children she helps care for.

Having lost use to the softball fields for the past several years has already been frustrating enough. To find out that the pool and gym may close as well is really a punch to the gut of a community that relies on a close-by and affordable option to recreate and take care of themselves. I urge you all to consider finding a way to achieve finding a plan and funding to not avoid losing a positive and necessary resource to a beautiful neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Craig LaCourt
Red Hook resident

Dan Miller, resident of Council District 38
Comments for Committee on Parks and Recreation
Friday, December 10th

To: The Committee on Parks and Recreation
Regarding: The Red Hook Recreation Center

Dear Members of the Parks and Recreation Committee,

I am writing to request that the committee act to keep the Red Hook Recreation Center operational. **Please prioritize the necessary repair and upkeep work required to reopen the facility and keep it in good working order.**

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a vital resource for our neighborhood and provides important, accessible recreation space for communities beyond Red Hook as well. If the facility were to close indefinitely, Brooklyn would lose:

- A cooling center: Red Hook and surrounding neighborhoods face many environmental extremes and the Recreation Center provides a public space to cool off and gather outdoors during the summer months
- An accessible gym space: in a neighborhood with very few gym options and no other options at an affordable price point, the Red Hook Recreation Center provides an essential service

I cannot stress enough the importance of keeping the Red Hook Recreation Center operational and in good condition. It should be of the utmost concern to the Committee that that impacts of not maintaining the boiler, and thereby closing the facility indefinitely, would compound with existing environmental, economic, and racial justice issues that Red Hook faces. To sacrifice this facility and not act would be a missed opportunity for the committee to show that the impacts of Hurricane Ida, which so disproportionately caused lasting damage in NYC's communities of color and more economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, will not indefinitely disadvantage Red Hook residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

All best,
Dan Miller

Thursday, December 9, 2021

Red Hook Recreation Center

The Red Hook Recreation Center is an institution. The Red Hook Pool has the reputation for being “the cleanest and safest” of all of the city pools. Long time Red Hookers swim laps in the morning to stay physically and mentally sharp. It is an oasis for kids of all ages in the sweltering summer months.

The programming at the Red Hook Rec Center provides for all stakeholders. It is common ground for the front and the back. It is place to commune with your neighbor, to meet new people and to stay engaged.

This neighborhood cannot afford to lose one more amenity! The trees and benches have been ripped out of housing. The sprinklers are gone. The trucks are coming! We are all fighting the effects of being locked up over the last two years awaiting a safe return to regular exercise and the ability to socialize.

The building serves as a hub of activity. A place to pick up a new coat in the winter. A place to pick up a new school bag in the autumn. A place to grab a free lunch and cool off in the summer.

In a time when safety seems to be on everyone’s lips, we need a center where everyone and anyone can keep mentally, physically and emotionally fit. The benefits to the individual supports the collective. You cannot keep taking away from the people. It is simply inhumane and bad business practice. Let’s take the long view. Now is not the time to push health, happiness and safety to the back burner. The price of not fixing the center is way higher than the monetary cost of getting it up and running. The people of Red Hook deserve to be treated better.

Thank you for your time,

Danielle Swensen Vidals

Proud Red Hook mother, homeowner, small business owner, board member, who lives, works, supports and is actively engaged in the community

Van Brunt St
Brooklyn, NY 11231

12/10/2021

RE: Red Hook Rec Center - Temporary / Indefinite Closure

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you in dismay at the news that the Red Hook Rec Center is likely to, or will be closing indefinitely due Flood Damage and a lack of funding to enable all repairs.

Red Hook is unfortunately a community of two neighborhoods, the NYCHA Housing and everywhere else. Fortunately the good work of Red Hook Initiative and several individuals within the community, that is slowly changing. The Red Hook Rec Center is the one place that totally unites Red Hook. The Red Hook Rec Center is used by the entire community and the Pool is an absolute life line in the sweltering summer heat.

I have bared witness to the “temporary / indefinite” closure of the Ball Fields in the adjacent park, which has now gone on for almost a decade due to soil / lead remediation. This too was a facility that was embraced and used by the entire community.

I am writing to you in support of keeping community assets, such as the Red Hook Rec Center, alive and running for all to use and in a support of a neighborhood that deserves to know what is going on to ensure that is the case.

Concerned Red Hook Resident
Darren Norris

December 10, 2021

Denise Oswald
Van Brunt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231

Dear Committee on Parks and Recreation,

I was deeply disturbed and dismayed, as are my neighbors, to learn that the Parks Department is considering indefinitely closing The Red Hook Recreation Center. As a Red Hook resident for over sixteen years I can attest that the Recreation Center is a vital component of the community and one of the few beneficial amenities in a neighborhood that is constantly in a battle to maintain a healthy environment and quality of life for its inhabitants. We have no other gym in the immediate area, and certainly no nearby options as affordable as this. And with global warming steadily on the rise along with summer temperatures in New York City it shocks me to think you would leave a community of over 10,000 people without ready access to a free pool, particularly after removing over 450 of our street trees, which only intensifies the heat island effect in Red Hook. Then there is the fact that we have already been denied use of the ball fields for nearly a decade as remediation efforts have unnecessarily dragged on. Not to mention that when they do come fully back on line—whenever that will be—what was once green space will be covered in Astro Turf. A ludicrous decision for a neighborhood in a flood zone. Taken together, it would seem that the Parks Department and the city at large has adopted the same attitude toward Red Hook that Gerald Ford took toward New York in 1975: Drop Dead.

I find it hard to believe that a wealthier neighborhood would be so steadily stripped of basic quality of life amenities in this manner. Would this happen in Park Slope or Brooklyn Heights or Dumbo? I highly doubt it.

In closing, I hope you will recognize the important role the Rec Center plays for all residents of Red Hook and afford us the dignity and respect of keeping it open. We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the boiler and reopen the center as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Oswald

Elisa Anders, resident of Counsel District 38
Testimony for the Committee on Parks and Recreation
Thursday, December 9, 2021, 2:55 PM EST

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation:

It has recently come to my attention that the Committee on Parks and Recreation is planning to permanently closed the Red Hook Recreation Center. The disbelief I feel that this is even a consideration is palpable. This recreation center is a staple for the residents of the Red Hook neighborhood and beyond. In addition, the swimming pool at this recreation center is a godsend during the summertime, especially for those who can't cool down in any other way.

Red Hook is a close knit neighborhood that has collectively suffered much over the past years. The Red Hook Projects are currently undergoing an immense construction project which has not only removed ALL outdoor play spaces, but further causes constant water, electric and heating outages. The Red Hook ball fields have been closed for years as well, as the city slowly remediates lead issues from the soil. On top of these, the traffic on the streets is already thick and parking near impossible, yet more last mile warehouses are scheduled to complete in the neighborhood. This is a neighborhood already forgotten and stomped upon. I implore you to keep, at the very least, the neighborhood recreation center open.

At a time where it is imperative to keep our youth engaged, to keep health and welfare at the forefront, to share a sense of community in an increasingly crazy world, I am amazed that the city would even consider closing a loved and much needed recreation center, especially when the issue appears to be a faulty boiler. Please find the necessary financing to fix this boiler situation. We can not lose our Red Hook Recreation Center.

Sincerely,

Elisa Anders
Richards Street
oklvn. NY 11231

From: Liz York <lizpaintsnyc@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 5, 2021 11:43 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NYC Parks Recreation Centers

PLEASE INVEST IN OUR PARKS SYSTEM! Just 1% of the city budget dedicated to parks could provide staff and recreation programming that New Yorkers need!

26 NYC community board districts don't even have Parks Recreation Centers. New Yorkers would greatly benefit from them.

NYC's Recreation Centers are chronically under-staffed, badly in need of repairs, and are often closed.

NYC Rec. Centers are a wreck!

PLEASE INVEST IN OUR PARKS SYSTEM!

Thank you for investing in the health of New York's population.

Elizabeth York
Gold St,
New York, NY 10038

Dear Committee on Parks and Recreation,

I urge you to prioritize the Red Hook Recreation Center on Bay Street in Brooklyn. Access to exercise and community is essential to our neighborhood, and without a commitment to restore the boiler, it will be a tragic loss to our community. A temporary boiler is insufficient for this neighborhood that deserves more.

The Red Hook Rec Center is a staple institution to the community, including myself where I have vivid memories as a child learning how to swim in the pool. The Rec Center is important to us beyond just the pool. It grants access to affordable lunches to children in the summer, provides exercise equipment year-round to many, and serves as a polling station to our district when voting rights and access are ever-so important.

As a teen, I also have many memories of playing soccer on the ballfields surrounding the Rec Center. These fields are in the process of being restored, a promise that has been long standing since they were rendered unusable after Hurricane Sandy. Without sufficient outdoor space, there are very few outlets that our community has to exercise and maintain our health throughout the year. We need the Rec Center to stay open so we can stay healthy. This should be at the top of your list.

Thank you,
Emery Olson
Red Hook Resident

Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation
Tuesday, December 7th, 1 PM

Gita Nandan, resident of Council District 38

Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation

Tuesday, December 7th, 1:00PM EST

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a core facility in our community. I can not express how important it is, and how critical it is that it remain open, operable and continue to be a heart of this community. It is a multi-use space with a fitness center, public pool, and programming space, and it is used daily, loved, and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. It's also loved by surrounding neighborhoods once summertime starts and it transforms into the extremely popular outdoor pool. I personally use the facility nearly everyday, to work out, to swim every morning of the summer, and as a point along my exercise route.

Being healthy and active doesn't come cheap. Many gym memberships and fitness classes can be very pricey and an investment that many households can't afford- especially coming out of the pandemic. Having an affordable resource like the Red Hook Recreation center is extremely valuable in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. The pool is an historic part of our history, and its services are invaluable. Red Hook is a heat island, and its important as a space to cool off, for mental and physical health is immeasurable. I literally moved to Red Hook to have access to this unique space.

The residents of Red Hook constantly get taken advantage of by the city. In the past two years alone, we have had to endure the loss of 457+ trees in our neighborhood, an increase in asthma rates, high toxicity levels in our soil, the closure of our ballfields, and now several last-mile facilities being built that will bring over 7,000 trucks a day through our neighborhood, there are too many issues affecting our quality of living and choosing profit over people. With all of these factors limiting our outdoor recreation, it's important now more than ever to have a safe and large facility to exercise in.

We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming.

Sincerely,

Gita Nandan, resident + board chair RETI Center

NO TO CLOSING THE RED HOOK RECREATION CENTER

I have been swimming in the RED HOOK POOL FOR OVER 20 YEARS THIS IS APPALLING THAT THE CITY IS CONSIDERING CLOSING THE POOL AND THE RECREATION CENTER.

As a local community member living on Huntington Street the pool is very important part of my family's life. I started taking my daughter there when she was a baby, she is now 26 years old. It is our oasis in this hot deteriorating city. It is a luxury for people like myself to have a place to go in the summer. I am a public-school teacher here in Brooklyn NY, it been such a pleasure to see my students enjoying the pool along with me. WE NEED THE POOL. It's disgraceful that our low-income families are losing this amazing resource. I had plans to join the gym this coming year, with the pandemic it has kept me away from participating on indoor exercising but with more people getting vaccinated I was planning on coming back to exercise at the Red Hook recreation center. With all the new parks activities in the Red Hook area it is essential to continue to have an indoor recreational center with a pool. Please reconsider closing the center and think about the people of the community young and old.

Thank you,
Gloria j Truppi
glotruppi@yahoo.com

Jim Tampakis - Resilient Red Hook Member, Long Time Red Hook Business Owner

Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation Tuesday, December 7th, 1:00PM EST To the Committee on Parks and Recreation, The Red Hook Recreation Center is a staple in our community. As a fitness center, public pool, and programming space, the Rec Center is used, loved, and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. It is used all year long as a resource for Community Meetings, Activities Etc. It's also loved by surrounding neighborhoods once summer time starts and it transforms into the extremely popular outdoor pool. Being healthy and active doesn't come cheap. It is a much needed space for a release for people to come and meet, exercise, and feel the neighborhood has much more to offer all locals - especially coming out of the pandemic. Having an affordable resource like the Red Hook Recreation center is extremely valuable in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. Especially with the city membership deal going on right now where you can sign up for a free year-long membership, this is something our neighborhood desperately needs now more than ever. The residents of Red Hook constantly get taken advantage of by the city. In the past two years alone, we have had to endure the loss of 457+ trees in our neighborhood, an increase in asthma rates, high toxicity levels in our soil, the closure of our ballfields, and now several last-mile facilities being built that will bring over 7,000 trucks a day through our neighborhood, there are too many issues affecting our quality of living and choosing profit over people. With all of these factors limiting our outdoor recreation, it's important now more than ever to have a safe and large facility to exercise in. We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming.

Sincerely,

Jim Tampakis
Resilient Red Hook Member
President, Marine Spares International, Inc.
Richards Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231

My name is Joshua Winter and I work as a teacher in the Red Hook Community. The Red Hook Rec center is an integral part of this community. It serves not only as a place to work out or play basketball, but as a place to hold community events. During the pandemic, the facility, like many others in the city, was shut down. However, it still served an important purpose as a convenient location for a testing site used by many Brooklyn residents.

As the pandemic approaches its end, the Rec Center should remain open as a place for the people that live and work in Red Hook to use as a community center and work out location.

I use it frequently as it is very easy to get to from my job. Every time I do, I see many residents of the community, many senior citizens, making use of the equipment and space to work out. The health of the people of this community, both social and physical, is too important to ignore. Closing this center would do just that. I encourage the city to complete the required maintenance and keep the Red Hook Community Center open.

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Red Hook Recreation Center is an essential part of our community. As a fitness center, public pool, and programming space, the Rec Center is used, loved, and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. My family of 5 has frequented it for the past 17 years! It's also loved by surrounding neighborhoods when it transforms into the extremely popular outdoor pool during the summer months.

Many gym memberships and fitness classes can be very pricey and an investment that many households can't afford- especially coming out of the pandemic. Having an affordable resource like the Red Hook Recreation center is extremely valuable in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. Especially with the city membership deal going on right now where you can sign up for a free year-long membership, this is something our neighborhood desperately needs now more than ever.

The residents of Red Hook constantly get taken advantage of by the city. In the past two years alone, we have had to endure the loss of 457+ trees in our neighborhood, an increase in asthma rates, high toxicity levels in our soil, the closure of our ballfields, and now several last-mile facilities being built that will bring over 7,000 trucks a day through our neighborhood, there are too many issues affecting our quality of living and choosing profit over people. With all of these factors limiting our outdoor recreation, it's important now more than ever to have a safe and large facility to exercise in.

We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, and with gratitude,
Juno Shaye (Red Hook resident since 2005)

We already lost the red hook recreation to the pandemic...red hook ballfields to years of remediation...loss over 500 trees to resiliency work... gained last mile truck distribution centers and now you want to close the RED HOOK RECREATION?...

This is environmental injustice and we demand full funding...

Karen Blondel
Red Hook Organizer
Resident

December 9, 2021

Dear Committee Members:

As a member of the local community, I urge you to fund needed repairs to the Red Hook Rec Center in the wake of Hurricane Ida. The center is an integral part of the surrounding neighborhoods—and one that I personally value immensely. I have been numerous times to the pool and hope to continue to do so. The rec center serves a unique role because its ability to draw not just Red Hook residents but also residents like me from nearby neighborhoods builds a stronger, more cohesive, more vibrant Brooklyn.

Please don't allow the Red Hook Rec Center to close for lack of repair funding.

Sincerely,

Lauren Anton

I work in Red Hook and feel the Red Hook Rec Center is a staple in the community. The center has many programs for kids in the neighborhood that are not offered anywhere else. The pool and the fitness center are used by many and will continued to be used by the community. It would be very unfortunate for these programs and facilities to close. I am writing to you to join in with others to request that the Red Hook Rec Center stay open for the community.

Sincerely,

Lisa Amore

Red Hook Rec Center

I work in Red Hook and will be moving to Red Hook in January 2022. Over the past 7 years that I've worked in the neighborhood, I've noticed that the Red Hook Rec Center is a staple in the community. The center has many programs for kids in the neighborhood that are not offered anywhere else. The pool and the fitness center are used by many and will continued to be used by the community. It would be very unfortunate for these programs and facilities to close. I am writing to you to join in with others to request that the Red Hook Rec Center stay open for the community.

Thank you.

Mark Sperrazza

As a resident and business owner in Red Hook for more than a decade, I know the wide powerful reach of the Rec Center on so many levels. My children were swim team members of the center for three years and I have been a participant in early morning lap swim time for many years. I also know that it has served the red hook houses community, in the joys of just having a beautiful pool to splash about in on a hot Brooklyn August afternoon.

Our neighborhood has lost so much already in the still-unfinished ballfields replenishment, the loss of open land by the water that has transformed our harbor view into an amazon warehouse shipping behemoth. The city has already gained so much at the neighborhood's expense- commercial warehouse development, endless movie shoots and oversized trucks. Can't the city give us back something we already had?

Thank you

Mary Dudine Kyle

Van Brunt St.

To Whom it May Concern,

Prior to COVID, I really enjoyed using the Red Hook Rec Center. In addition to the historical importance, being a New Deal Project, I think it's a great resource for the community and would be saddened if other people could not enjoy it as I did.

Best,

Matthew Goldman

Matthew King, Resident and Voter in Council District 38
Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation
Tuesday, December 7th, 1:00PM EST

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation,

The Plea:

Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming and infrastructure. The Red Hook Recreation Center is extremely important to my community and to me personally. I'd urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the boiler and any other equipment or infrastructure needed for it to reopen! We already lost the ball fields. There is a dwindling amount of public infrastructure committed to our beloved community.

The Threat:

Specifically, the pool in the summertime is a moral imperative in our neighborhood. Without it as a safe place for families and teenagers to cool off and congregate, I think the city would be asking for trouble. I'm also confident that in the next election, *any* such troublesome consequences that could be plausibly (or even implausibly) connected to it's closure would be tied (loudly, and stubbornly) to the campaigns of whomever voted to close it.

Red Hook is becoming increasingly politically active as more wealthy, connected people move here with time on their hands. Be cautious in your deliberations.

Sincerely,
Matt King

Dear Council Persons:

I am writing in testimony in critical support of the Red Hook Recreation Center (RHRC). The boiler needs to be repaired and the center needs to remain open. The RHRC is a vital part of Red Hook's culture and community. It is more than an affordable exercise facility or place to exercise our constitutional right to vote. It is also a lifeline, providing access to positive and safe physical and mental stimulation, for many of Red Hook's most vulnerable members - children, low income families and seniors. You may only see the cost of a boiler - a line on a budget - a number - but shutting down this vital resource will cost the people of Red Hook and the surrounding communities so much more. Please replace the boiler and save the Red Hook Recreation Center.

Thank you,
Melanie Paul

December 9, 2021

From: Melissa Cicetti, Resident of Council District 38
Testimony for Committee on Parks and Recreation

Dear Committee Members –

As the President of the Beard Street Block Association, I write to petition that the Red Hook Recreation Center be prioritized for funding to repair the boiler and other Super Storm Sandy damage and remain open for decades to come.

Red Hook Recreation Center plays a critical role in the social, emotional, and physical fabric of our community. For decades upon decades it has served as a locus for community gathering – a critical location for the physical and emotional well-being of the community. It provides an affordable alternative to privately owned gyms and recreation centers for everyone from toddlers to elderly.

In a neighborhood which is besieged by last-mile trucking, the Red Hook Recreation Center is an island of social and communal good surrounded by a sea of consumerism.

During the first year+ of the pandemic, I guarantee you that the majority of Red Hook residents believed that the Rec Center was temporarily closed for the health of the community and to act as a mass testing site. To find out at the 11th hour that it is slated for indefinite closure because of storm damage from almost 10 years ago is a travesty and a disgrace.

All Red Hook Residents – and Residents from many surrounding neighborhoods (EVERYONE LOVES THE POOL!) depend upon the Rec Center. Losing it would create a huge void in the neighborhood. Why would any City agency do such an UN-CIVIC act as this? Will it become yet another last-mile trucking site or abandoned shell to waste away?

Be bold – do the right thing – and KEEP THE RED HOOK RECREATION CENTER OPEN.

Respectfully yours,

Melissa Cicetti, Red Hook resident and President of the Beard Street Block Association

To: New York City Council

The Red Hook Community Center should replace its boiler and remain open. I used to work out there every morning prior to covid and it is the only affordable gym for residents in the area. Community members would exercise and lift weights throughout the day and kids would use the basketball court, especially in the winter months. It housed computer classes, tai chi lessons for seniors and after school programs. The community deserves it to be open.

It's an essential location for the neighborhood. During the pandemic, it was a highly utilized testing center for covid tests that often had long lines to get in.

If the closure lasts until the summer month, the pool is an essential piece for the community. It's essential for extremely hot days and required extended hours for residents to beat the heat. It is full almost every day but spacious enough for residents to social distance outdoors during the pandemic. My children, 8, 7 and 4 love swimming there.

The Red Hook Community Center should be funded to fix the boiler and support its staff. It also should receive funds for renovations to the locker rooms and basketball courts so it can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Michael Lee

Court St.

Brooklyn, NY 11231

Dec. 9, 2021
Van Brunt Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231-1245
mjkowalski1950@gmail.com

re: keeping the Red Hook Rec Center and all of its facilities open

As a longtime resident of Red Hook I urge you to do all in your power to keep the Red Hook Rec Center and all of its facilities open. It's outrageous that, nine years after Hurricane Sandy devastated Red Hook, related storm damage to the Center's boiler should remain unattended, threatening the continuing operation of this essential community service. The current handling of the boiler problem would put a third-world government to shame.

Coupled with the decade-long closure of the Red Hook ballfields and the current closure of neighborhood's library, the closure of the Rec Center would send a clear message to the youth and young adults of the area that, when it comes to concrete action, neither the Borough, the City, nor the federal government is interested in—or perhaps not even capable of—providing minimal services. Coupled with the city's ill-advised destruction of over four hundred trees in the heart the neighborhood (so much for flood control in the next hurricane!) and the inexcusable bungling of rudimentary care for the Rec Center's boiler in the aftermath of Sandy's flooding, it's hard to avoid drawing the conclusion that what might have passed for benign—or incompetent—neglect is beginning to look more like contempt.

Sincerely,
Dr. Michael J. Kowalski

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on the behalf of the Red Hook Parks and Rec center. A wonderful establishment that is an asset in the community. I have used the weight room many times during breaks and it has helped me make friends. It is clearly linking and knitting this community closer together. I have seen countless events supporting the community ranging from basketball class to Halloween extravaganzas. It is a special place that needs to remain to bring people together, and create a kinder world.

Best,

Michael Kaponyas

The Red Hook Rec Center is a critical part of community access and resources in the neighborhood. This site was our testing center and our vaccine center. This site has been used for voting. These are in addition to its main purpose- a space for recreation. With the ball field revitalization taking over 5 years, and the recent closure of Red Hook Park and soccer fields, the outdoor space access has been dramatically reduced. There are so few spaces for exercise which is only being made worse by the construction of Last Mile facilities. This neighborhood is being hurt enough. The Red Hook Rec Center must be made functional as soon as possible.

Mrunali Das

Greetings,

I writing to express my thoughts on the “temporary closure” of the Redhook Recreation Center.

First let me say I went to the center to workout back in 2018-2019-2020 till the Covid pandemic stopped everything. For myself it was, and is, a great place to workout.

A physical representation of Social Projects that NYC offers as a perk of living here! Thirty foot ceilings. An affordable price! leaving to a mixed group of people from different social classes. Love it.

Larger take... I was surprised to hear that the Parks Department is considering a permanent closure? I hope that's not truly being considered? But if it is being considered?

I don't know how the calculations for that idea would have been made?

On the numbers that have been used in the last two years? The Center has been closed for two years. Apart from some restricted Pool time? Let's assume that the Parks department found a statistical controlled way to discern that the funds are not being used correctly? Why are the numbers low at the Redhook Recreation Center?

Answer is - No Advertising

As a resident of Redhook for twelve years I didn't know that there was a “center” there for five of those years. The first time I went there was with my son , at age five, to the pool. When I went into the Mens changing area I passed the Workout area. Till that point I didn't know that that there was a weight lifting and cardio area in the Rec Center. Two years later I found myself with a weak back and told by my doctor that I needed to strengthen it. I went into the Park's Recreation Center to see what the cost was. Eight dollars a month. I couldn't believe that I was lucky enough to live seven blocks away from the best deal in gyms in NYC. Not to mention the size and general quality of the place. I do understand the there are some small cosmetic fixes that would “jazz” the place up. I'm thinking some new lockers?

If the Parks Department is using “body count” to make a decisions on whether to close Redhook Center permanently I think that it's not fair from just the stand point that No one knows its even there and what it has. I just did a google maps search for gyms in Redhook and I see that it does Not come up on the Redhook parks location. I tested the one over in Sunset park and that one doesn't come up as well. Is there a Law or Rule that the Parks Department can't put Gym on google maps? That's a problem if that's the case.

The Pool - This one is very close to my heart.

I had the privilege to grow up with swimming. I had lakes , the ocean and pools in my life from birth. Currently I'm lucky to own a car in the City and go to the beach as much as I can. I also had the fortunate life of being taught how to sail from a young age. I'm part of a sailing club in Brooklyn Bridge Park called Onefifteen Sail Club. I skippered one of the Sunday morning boats most of the summer that was specifically used to get people from Brooklyn to try sailing. I was caught off guard in the middle of the Bay, think next to the Statue of Liberty, the first year that I did this because some of the people that I was taking out on their first sailing experience did not know how to swim. Obviously not knowing how to swim is going to make you very uncomfortable when on a boat. I truly can't imagine it. This is simply an injustice. It's one thing to Not want to go swimming or like the beach or boating. But to not have the option because you were ‘unlucky’ to not have access to clean safe water. That's simply just not fair.

I've found that boating and water activities ground me out. Make me feel connected with the earth and intern life. I think that other people would feel the same way if they had the ‘chance’ too?

I'm thinking that what I just laid out is not news to the Parks Department and there is some other "inside baseball" reason that the permanent closure is being considered? Some reason I'm too far away from to make sense of? So I'll end of this.

Please reopen the Redhook Recreation Center after fixing the heating system.

All the best!
Thank You
Nathan Shepard

Feel free to write me back? at
shepardcarpentry@gmail.com

Extended remarks for 12/7/21 City Council Hearing on expanding access to NYC Parks, by Neile Weissman, Complete George, neileweissman@gmail.com

Grayways—a proposal to connect NYC parks with 500 miles of recreational bikeways. <https://tinyurl.com/2p8fx5jk>



NY Times.

Proposal Summary

Grayways calls on NYC's Departments of Transportation (DOT) and Parks & Recreation (DOPR) to designate 500 miles of recreational urban bike routes to connect city parks.

Grayways can be implemented quickly and cheaply by hosting GPS data on the [DOT website](#). As routes gain acceptance, they can be upgraded with safety improvements and signage.

Beneficiaries include NYC's [800,000 cyclists](#) who have few recreational facilities not crowded with runners and walkers, and neighborhood food shops who'd see a surge in customers.

Grayways Characteristics

- Examples cited below extend through the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and [Staten Island](#). Many begin and end in Manhattan.
- Each route aggregates separated paths, on-road bike lanes, low-volume secondary roads and industrial areas that get little traffic on weekends.
- They avoid already overcrowded facilities like Central-Prospect Park Drives, Coney Island-FDR Boardwalks and Hudson Greenway.
- Neighborhood food shops and parks are featured to facilitate outdoor dining and provide frequent rest stops.

- Initially, the routes will attract groups of cyclists with experience riding in traffic. Over time, as routes are improved, increasing numbers of NYC’s cycling community will take advantage.
- The plan does not close streets, take parking spots or involve the NYPD.

Precedents include: [1997 NYC Bicycle Master Plan](#), [Somerset Walk-Bike-Hike](#), [Bergen Parks Master Plan](#), [U.S. Bicycle Route System](#), [Connecticut Scenic Roads](#), [Transport for London’s Strategic Cycling Analysis](#), [East Coast Greenway](#), [Old Croton Aqueduct State Park](#), [Regional Plan Association Five Borough Bikeway](#), [New York State Scenic Byways](#), [Suffolk County Hike And Bike Master Plan](#)



Hamilton Beach

Benefits—as prioritized in the proposed [Restore Mother Nature Bond Act](#):

Extend Access to Green Space

- Like DOPR’s [Walk to a Park](#) program, Grayways enhance resident access to green space. And, by mitigating distances traveled they make available all city facilities, even those only accessible by car—[Shirley Chisholm Park](#).
-
- By re-envisioning the act of travel as a recreational activity, and select roadways as recreational space, grayways blur the border between parks and their environs—which is the objective of [Parks Without Borders](#).
-
- Grayways will showcase the \$130 million invested in the [Community Parks Initiative](#). And it will help reduce disparities in future capital funding by broadening the constituency for each facility.
-

A [survey](#) commissioned by People for Bikes found that seven times as many bike for recreation than transportation. Therefore, dual-use projects should grow the constituency considerably faster than those intended solely for commuting.

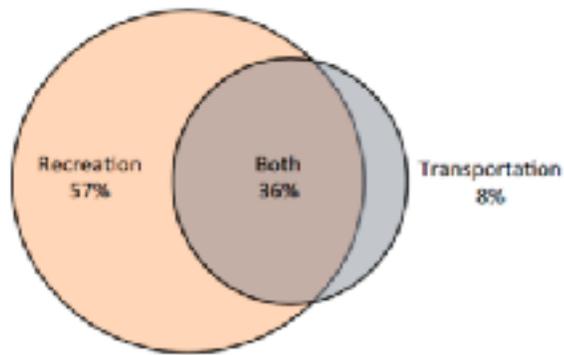


Image People for Bikes.

Benefit Underserved Constituencies

- Extend opportunities for exercise and recreation to residents across NYC, particularly to communities with limited access to green space.
- Bridge transportation deserts. Reduce household spending on travel.
- Create a compelling rationale for bike share providers to extend service to outer boroughs—and a literal road map for where to site dock stations.
- Enhance the [health benefits of existing bikeways](#) by extending trip distances, increasing use and enhancing the [safety of numbers](#).

Create Jobs, Develop Local Economies

[Cycle tourism added \\$97 billion to the U.S. economy in 2017](#). Per capita, that's \$248 million per year in NYC—but that doesn't factor the City's 1300 mile bike grid, 20 million bike share trips and that 10% of adult residents regularly ride.

- Leverage the billions of dollars invested in [bike paths](#) and [city parks](#) as a vehicle to drive tourism and support the trend toward [staycations](#).
- Support [Business Improvement Districts'](#) promotion of local business and special events —[Bronx Night Market](#).
- Draw cycle tourists from Long Island, Westchester, Connecticut, New Jersey.



Brookville Park (Idlewild).

- Support neighborhood home values. [Smart growth](#) studies by the National Association of Realtors correlate a [5-10% increase in property values](#) to their proximity to bikeways.
-

Have a Positive Effect on Climate Change

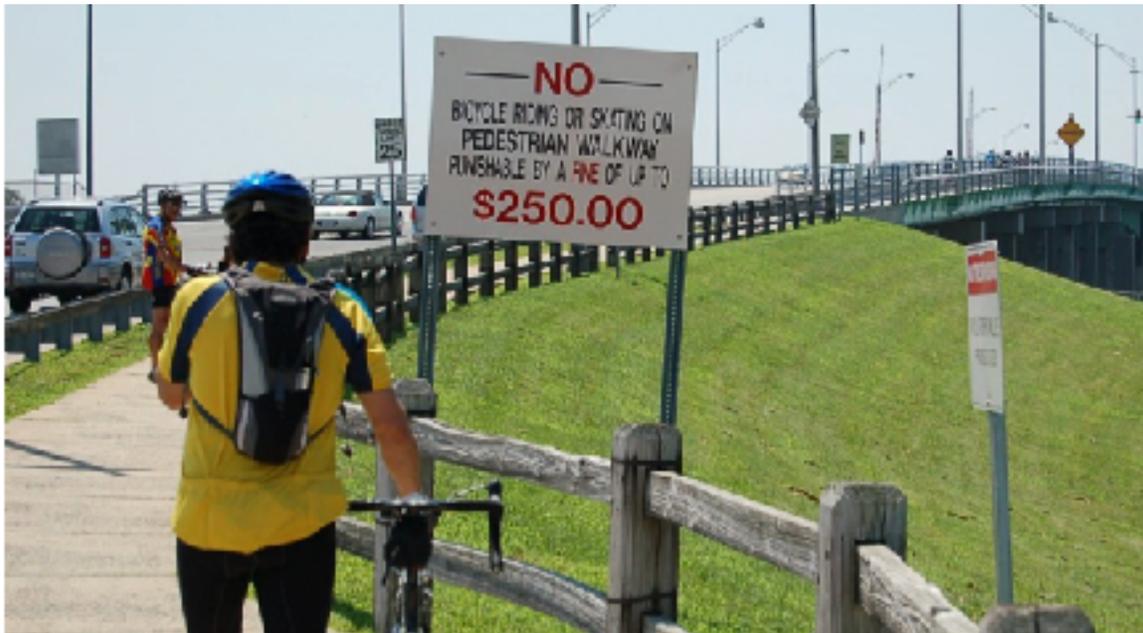
- Promote cycling as a preferred travel mode, reducing vehicle miles traveled.
- Grow multi-modal trips by increasing catchment and capacity of neighborhood transit hubs. Create the safe connectors for bike share providers to site facilities.



Image Warren J. Wells

Invest in Resilient Infrastructure

- Supplement mass transit during periods of peak use—particularly with the advent of E-Bikes which can [cut travel times in half](#).
- Enhance resilience to [widespread transport outage](#) resulting from extreme weather events, [structural failure](#) or global pandemic.
- Spur bridge operators to enhance access on [arterial crossings](#)—[Henry Hudson](#), [Cross Bay](#), [Marine Parkway](#), [Tri-Boro](#) and [Outerbridge](#).



[Marine Parkway Bridge](#). Photo by John T. Chiarella.

Routes

(15) examples comprise a map (red is outbound), a GPS file (requires [free account](#)), printout of the turn directions (“cue sheet”) and a featured food stop. See: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8fx5jk>

Press

- [London prepares for 10-fold increase in cycling-walking](#), Smart Cities, 5/20
- [How Paris’ cycling success built a roadmap for others](#), Curbed, 1/20
- [Deaths Expose Chaos of Central Park Loop](#), NY Times, 9/28/14
- [NYC Council Intro – DRAFT](#)

Organization

[Complete George](#) is two hundred organizations, communities and electeds calling for expanded bike access across the George Washington Bridge.

Bio

[Neile Weissman](#) heads up [Complete George](#)—250 organizations and communities who've called for expanded bike capacity across the George Washington Bridge. He also leads 50+ rides per year for [New York Cycle Club](#) and is its current Public Relations Director.



Westchester North County Trailway. Image Alex Lektchinov.

###

From: Neile Weissman <neileweissman@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 3, 2021 6:09 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] testimony for 12/7 Oversight Hearing on Access to Recreational Programs

TWIMC,

I request the opportunity to speak at the 12/7/21 City Council Hearing on expanding access to NYC Parks.

Neile Weissman (he/him)
Complete George
neileweissman@gmail.com



NY Times.

Proposal Summary

Grayways calls on NYC's Departments of Transportation (DOT) and Parks & Recreation (DOPR) to designate 500 miles of recreational urban bike routes to connect city parks.

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Beneficiaries include NYC's [800,000 cyclists](#) who have few recreational facilities not crowded with runners and walkers, and neighborhood food shops who'd see a surge in customers.

Full proposal: <https://tinurl.com/2p8fx5jk>

December 10, 2021

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation-

The Red Hook Recreation Center is a staple in our community. As a fitness center, public pool, and programming space, the Rec Center is used, loved, and enjoyed by everyone in the neighborhood. It's also loved by surrounding neighborhoods once summer time starts and it transforms into the extremely popular outdoor pool.

Being healthy and active doesn't come cheap. Many gym memberships and fitness classes can be very pricey and an investment that many households can't afford- especially coming out of the pandemic. Having an affordable resource like the Red Hook Recreation center is extremely valuable in a low-income neighborhood like Red Hook. Especially with the city membership deal going on right now where you can sign up for a free year-long membership, this is something our neighborhood desperately needs now more than ever.

The residents of Red Hook constantly get taken advantage of by the city. In the past two years alone, we have had to endure the loss of 457+ trees in our neighborhood, an increase in asthma rates, high toxicity levels in our soil, the closure of our ballfields, and now several last-mile facilities being built that will bring over 7,000 trucks a day through our neighborhood, there are too many issues affecting our quality of living and choosing profit over people. With all of these factors limiting our outdoor recreation, it's important now more than ever to have a safe and large facility to exercise in.

We urge you to make sure the city puts the money forward to fix the flood-ruined boiler and open the rec center back up. Red Hook cannot afford anymore cuts to essential programming.

Sincerely,

Nick Ravich
Red Hook Resident, 193 Richards Street

Dear City Council Members:

I just learned from my neighbors that the Red Hook Rec center needs to be closed to undergo repairs and that the Council is contemplating not re-opening it. I am writing to try to convey just how important the Rec center and pool is to our community. Over the years, my family has used the center and pool a great deal, especially my two teenage sons. It is accessible and affordable, and also a place where all members of our Red Hook community can be together in a positive environment. We need to have more places like that available to us, not less.

It is already very hard to have the ballfields closed for such a long period of time – to lose the Rec center as well would be devastating. Red Hook has gone through so much loss since Hurricane Sandy, and the influx of big trucking warehouses has made it less receptive to families that call it home. Please let the council know that keeping the rec center open is critical to the vitality of our neighborhood and the ability of our members to stay healthy and safe.

Yours sincerely,

Niki Warin

**Comment to Support the Red Hook Recreation Center in District Council 38, Brooklyn, NY by
Pat Weber Sones, former resident and homeowner in Red Hook**

**Submitted to the NYC Dept of Parks and Recreation December 10th, 2021 in Follow Up to the
Parks and Recreation Meeting Held December 7th, 2021**

I am writing in strong support of the Red Hook Recreation Center, and to urge the City Council and Dept of Parks and Recreation to make the necessary funding available to repair the facility's deficiencies, as well as funding the ongoing costs of running the Recreation Center including, but not limited to: staffing personnel, equipment, programming, communications, utilities, insurances and general upkeep.

Located in the heart of Red Hook, the Rec Center has been an invaluable hub for the community for many decades. It affords neighborhood families a safe place for exercise and community cultural programs. In the summer, many Brooklynites from neighboring communities come to enjoy one of the best public swimming pools in all of New York City. It is a gem in the Parks and Recreation portfolio, and is beyond understanding how this wonderful place, which promotes healthy life style opportunities for a community with few other options, could possibly be under consideration for defunding.

Red Hook has suffered from many setbacks in recent years, including the closure of our ballfields and track due to lead contamination, and the destruction of hundreds of trees during construction at the Red Hook Houses. The impacts of these actions serve to keep Red Hook in a state of uncertainty, especially since the remediation of the outdoor recreation facilities are far behind schedule. Losing the Recreation Center would have a devastating effect on the health and morale of the neighborhood.

The Recreation Center is a place people can go to meet with other neighbors and enjoy the benefits of exercise in a facility right in their own neighborhood. Travel to and from Red Hook is not an easy proposition, and the advantage of the centrally located Recreation Center to the community cannot be overstated.

Please dedicate the funds necessary to repair the flood ruined boiler, and make the upgrades that would bring the Red Hook Recreation Center up to the standard all of New York City citizens expect from their public amenities. Red Hook residents deserve the same respect to their needs as every other community throughout the 5 boroughs.

Thank you for recognizing the intrinsic and invaluable resources that the Recreation Center offers to the residents of Red Hook. Dedicating the necessary funding will be a shot in the arm for the neighborhood, and restore an important element of healthy community cohesion.

Respectfully submitted:

Pat Weber Sones

Louis Sones

We Cannot Lose Our Red Hook Recreation Center

It comes as a surprise to hear from our city council that there were discussions of possibly closing our Red Hook Recreation Center.

I've been a resident of Red Hook for over 13 years and have been a witness to what it means to have a neighborhood recreation center that serves many purposes for our community such as swimming – fitness training – athletics – afterschool events and other very uplifting activities that brings reasonably cost-efficient fulfillment and happiness to many of our community members.

Community members are entitled to have a place where we can go for not only leisure activities but also a distribution center where we can come for Covid vaccines / testing as we appreciate the convenience of having a place where many can meet up with neighbors alike for serious and fun activities.

As we all are aware during Hurricane Sandy our center served a pivotal role as a distribution center – so it is evident that it serves a purpose for catastrophic sentinel events.

I am in support of keeping our recreation center open. The center will always be a place where community members can come to enjoy constructive community work instead of aimlessly roaming the streets looking for trouble.

I hope we can commit to ensuring that we gather the necessary funding needed to keep our center open as we work towards building a better and improved Red Hook.

12/10/21

To: NYC Committee on Parks and Recreation

Re: The Red Hook Recreation Center

Dear members of the Parks and Recreation Committee,

Please do all you can to keep the Red Hook Recreation Center open and accessible to our community!

The Red Hook Recreation Center is critical to the well-being of Red Hook and surrounding neighborhoods. Through the provision of fitness center, public pool, and programming space, it is much loved for providing essential services:

- space to exercise for those who can't afford a private gym membership, which became even less affordable for many folks during the pandemic
- a safe place outside the home for residents to spend time productively while being shielded from potentially hazardous weather like extreme summer heat
- a gathering place to come together as a community

If Red Hook were to lose the Recreation Center – especially because of the maintenance cost of a boiler – it would seriously compound the already environmental and economic injustices the community of Red Hook faces. The societal and economic cost to the City of New York would surely be more than the small repairs and maintenance currently required to make the facility operational.

I cannot stress enough the importance of keeping the Red Hook Recreation Center not only operational but in very good condition. Please work to ensure that the city puts the money forward to fix the boiler and open the space back up.

Sincerely,
Rajesh Kottamasu
Red Hook resident

Rose L. Miller-Sims
Huntington ST
Brooklyn, NY 11231

December 10, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of Carroll Gardens on the border with Red Hook and I also work in Red Hook at a school located on Columbia Street. I am writing in regards to the closing of the Red Hook Recreation Center located at 155 Bay Street. During my time working in the neighborhood, and now living in the neighborhood there have been immense changes to the spaces available to the community. In particular the closing of the track, park, and ball fields on Bay Street have already been a huge loss for the neighborhood, and the closing of the Rec Center would only compound these losses. The Rec Center provides a much needed alternative to high-cost gyms for exercise now that the outdoor track is no longer available for use. In addition, the outdoor pool is a real boon to the neighborhood in the summers. Please reconsider closing the center if at all possible! I appreciate your efforts and the time taken to review my thoughts.

Best regards,

Rose Miller-Sims

Dec 10, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sohui Kim, a long -time resident and business owner here in Red Hook for 20 years. I would like to voice my opinion that the Red Hook Rec Center serves the community in so many ways that it would be impossible to count the ways in which it would be missed if it were to ever close. Please do not close this Rec Center.

Sincerely Yours,

Sohui Kim
Coffey Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231

The Red Hook Rec Center is a really important part of the community. Obviously everyone has said this and we all know it. But it is worth reinforcing that the green space that the red hook rec center maintains is very special and unheard of in most parts of New York City. The grass is something so special to my city kids. Finding sticks and admiring wildlife is one of their favorite pastimes. I don't know what we would have done during lockdown without the access that we had.

Additionally, I always see the people who use the gym. Because my kids are younger we haven't been able to use the rec center yet, but the people who do it use always look so thankful for it. Many of them would probably not move their bodies were it not for the rec center.

It is vital to the health of the community and surrounding areas that the rec center remain open!

S. Burt

My family and I have lived in Red Hook for over 8 years. My son spent many summer days swimming in the Red Hook Rec Center pool. It was a way for him to interact with other kids in the community. My husband has a membership to the gym and found it to be the only affordable place nearby to get some exercise. We feel that the Rec center is an important part of the Red Hook Community and it would be a great loss if it were to close.

Terumi Matthews

Tony Schloss
Red Hook Resident
[Tonyschloss@gmail.com](mailto:Tonymschloss@gmail.com)

To Whom it May Concern,

For the 15+ years I have lived in the Red Hook neighborhood, The Red Hook Recreation Center has been a critical amenity for myself, my family, and the people of Red Hook. It must be kept open, and provided enough resources to keep the programs and facilities serving the community.

In NYC, where cost of living is so high, my Rec Center gym membership was a lifeline for me when I could not afford the cost of private gyms. I loved going to workout there alongside the diverse group of exercisers who I shared the space with. My sons learned to swim at the Red Hook pool, together as a family and as part of the toddler swim classes. I also played basketball and pool with them and other youth, treasured memories for me.

I was part of the staff at the Red Hook Initiative for almost 10 years, and for the youth I worked with, the Rec Center was an often mentioned resource for them. When I first began working at RHI, we used the computer lab to create media projects. It was my first introduction to the Rec, and launched mine, and hundreds other careers and hobbies in the media arts.

The Rec Center is a crucial resource in our resource starved community. Red Hook does not have many resources, and is separated from other areas of the city that may offer them. I implore you to find the necessary funds to keep the Rec Center open. It is your duty as civic leaders to do so, I hope you will assume the responsibility we hold in you as our community representatives.

Thank you for reading and for supporting the residents of Red Hook.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'TS' or a stylized 'Tony Schloss'.

Tony Schloss

William Scott Pfaffman

Van Brunt Street

Brooklyn

December 6, 2021

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation

I am writing to address the closure of the Red Hook Recreation Center as a result of damage to the boiler plant due to Hurricane Ida. The facility had managed to remain open until impending cold and potentially freezing weather apparently forced the closure. In most cases a temporary boiler would have been installed to provide heat to the premises. But the damage to the facility was apparently too extensive for this option to be implemented. I assume that an emergency repair to the system was deemed too costly and perhaps even shortsighted considering the extensive storm proofing occurring in the Red Hook Houses. The long-term solution for heating, water and power supplies to the Recreation Center will likely require architectural and engineering design before work can commence.

For this reason I believe the installation of an outside temporary boiler would be best in the short term.

AND: This would critically allow the pool to open for the Summer.

While the ongoing study and preparation proceeded the community, reeling from the infrastructure work in the Houses, could be brought into the process. The Ballfields are about to open but little has been shared about the timelines for the renovation and lead abatement of the other fields. In my opinion some decent signage would help a lot.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

William "Scott" Pfaffman