

June 7, 2002

Adrian Benepe
Commissioner

Kevin Jeffrey
Deputy Commissioner for Public Programs

Department of Parks & Recreation
The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10021

Re: Rec Center Fees

Dear Commissioner Benepe and Mr. Jeffrey:

We are writing in regards to the recent decision to increase the fees for the recreation centers across the city.

We understand the rationale for overhauling this system. We especially support your efforts to make the fee structure consistent throughout the city and to put the funds generated by the fees directly into Parks Department coffers. We also fully support your decision to make use of the rec centers free to all youth 17 and under, as well as offer a rate of \$10 for senior citizens.

However, we are concerned with the increase in fees for adults for two reasons: the sudden jump of 200 percent, as is the case for the 59th Street Recreation Center, and the mandatory nature of the fees with your current structure.

1. As for the large increase in fees, we suggest that you truly endorse consistency as your motto and make all the centers the same price, with or without a pool, and make that price \$50, which would be a less dramatic increase. Fees generated should be treated as a dedicated source of revenue to be used exclusively for the maintenance and operation of recreation centers. In addition, payment of such fees should allow access to any and all recreation centers in the system.
2. The members of Manhattan Community Board No. 4 feel strongly that the city's recreation centers should be available to all city residents, and especially the poorest among us. We

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would not want any fee to result in excluding any members, especially parents, who could be required to manage a \$150 sum per family in order for the two parents to accompany their children to the center.

We also want to point out that traditionally, the recreation centers provided a place for the residents of this city to bathe, and for many of the homeless in our district, they still do.

We certainly understand the complications and administrative costs involved in permitting a quarterly or monthly fee schedule, which would have the benefit of lessening the financial burden. However, we ask that you find a creative solution to permitting people of low incomes to either pay over time, pay a reduced rate or be offered a scholarship based on income criteria.

We thank you for your consideration of our requests, and we look forward to working with you and your staff on improvements to the two rec centers in our district.

Sincerely,



Simone Sindin

Chair

Manhattan Community Board No. 4

John Doswell
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

Pam Frederick
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

This letter was passed at Manhattan Community Board No. 4's June 5, 2002 full board meeting.

cc: Hon. Michael Bloomberg, Mayor
Hon. C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, United States Representative
Hon. Eric Schneiderman, State Senator
Hon. Richard Gottfried, State Assemblymember
Hon. Scott Stringer, State Assemblymember
Hon. Gale Brewer, City Councilmember
Hon. Christine Quinn, City Councilmember