



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

July 3, 2019

Secretary David Bernhardt
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
exsec@ios.doi.gov

RE: Proposed Changes to the Fourth of July Celebration on the National Mall

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

At its regular meeting on June 19, 2019, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With seven of eight commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Harnett, to adopt the following resolution:

ANC 2A is concerned about a lack of communication with the community regarding recent changes made to Independence Day programs on the National Mall by the Department of Interior – acting on President Trump’s behest – this year. The Commission’s concern is deepened by community anxiety regarding potential safety, security, and logistical impacts associated with President Trump’s appearance at the event, including the potential for protest activity associated with the event spilling over into the neighborhood.

Foggy Bottom is the residential neighborhood that traditionally sees the greatest impact from the Fourth of July celebrations on the Mall, including large crowds, extended street closures, traffic congestion, enhanced security measures, and noise impacts.

The community has grown accustomed to the accommodations made for, and the resulting impacts from, this event but generally regards its proximity to the celebration and other events of national significance on the Mall as being a great distinguishing asset for the neighborhood.

In particular, we greatly appreciate how – for a great many years – this event has been set up, managed, and secured by the National Park Service and a number of D.C. and federal agencies working together professionally in cooperation.

The Commission notes that this event has been safely and successfully held according to roughly the same specifications for well over a decade, and is concerned that recent changes – intended in part to significantly increase crowd size – without adequate planning or communication, introduce an element of confusion and complication that does not serve either the national or local interest.



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We also note that the District of Columbia still has not been reimbursed for approximately \$7.3 million in costs it incurred during President Trump’s inauguration in 2017, that the expenses for this year’s event are anticipated to greatly exceed those of prior years, and therefore that – in addition to the logistical and communication challenges posed by this year’s changes – an excessive amount of local taxpayer resources will be siphoned to facilitate an event that appears to have an overtly political dimension.

Finally, ANC 2A objects to the extended closure of athletic fields in West Potomac Park that are heavily used by local residents and sports leagues between June 29th and July 6th – a time period that the fields are in peak use for summertime activities.

Commissioner Patrick Kennedy (2A01@anc.dc.gov) is the Commission’s representative in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kennedy
Vice Chairperson

CC: Commander Guillermo Rivera, Special Operations Division, MPD
Lieutenant Jason Bagshaw, Special Operations Division, MPD
Commander Duncan Bedlion, Second District, MPD
Captain Cheryl Crawley, Second District, MPD
Chris Rodriguez, Director, HSEMA
Clint Osborn, Operations Division Chief, HSEMA
Tanya Mitchell, Special Events Bureau Chief, HSEMA
Jeffrey Reinbold, Superintendent, National Mall and Memorial Parks
Robin Nixon, Chief of Partnerships, National Mall and Memorial Parks
Captain James Murphy, Commander - Central District, U.S. Park Police
Lieutenant Dave Lamond, Commander - Special Events Unit, U.S. Park Police
Nicole Goines, Mayor’s Office of Community Relations and Services