



# COUNTYWIDE RECREATION & PARKS ADVISORY BOARD

Testimony before the Montgomery County Council

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

FY '23 Operating Budget

Presented by Karen Kincer on behalf of the Countywide Recreation and Parks Advisory Board

Good evening Honorable Council Members. My name is Karen Kincer and I am the Chair of the County-Wide Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. I am here tonight to express thanks and support for the County Executive's funding of the Recreation Department and to ask you to fully support his proposed budget for the department.

Over the last few years, we have seen the department do its best with inadequate funding and while the efforts have been strong, the board has heard from members of the community that the results have been lacking. This budget seeks to right inadequate funding in several areas, most importantly in staffing.

Communities have asked for staff to allow increased, and location specific programming designed to target those most in need and this budget responds by providing for new community liaison specialists and for the conversion of numerous program coordinator positions from part to full time.

This Council has promoted programs to address access and participation in sports and recreation for individuals with disabilities, girls and for all children in lower income neighborhoods and this budget recognizes that those important initiatives need to be supported by staff to execute them and also to support them by funding positions to assist with things like communications and daily administrative support for out of school programs.

The executive's budget will allow the Recreation Department to provide a strong infrastructure to a vast array of programs and will allow important goals surrounding equity to be met. Anyone undertaking a serious effort to get better at a hobby or sport knows that you need to master the basics. You must walk before you can run. Our citizens deserve a recreation department that is running at full speed and the County Executive's budget will allow that to happen. We hope you will support the proposed funding of the Recreation Department.

Complementing our Recreation Department are our parks, a true source of respite and peace for so many during the pandemic. With the return of sports, events and rentals of pavilions and other facilities in the Parks, usage of our park facilities is at an all-time high and we hope that you will support the proposed funding our Parks Department so that they may continue to maintain and improve our park system for the enjoyment of all county residents.

As I mentioned, the Advisory Board has heard so much recently from members of the community about how important the services provided by our recreation department are, and how much they value access to our park and recreation facilities. We hope that you will support the proposed funding of the Department of Recreation and our parks.

