

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER—May 2013

Dear Neighbors,

In recognition of Emancipation Day, the Eastland Gardens Civic Association did not meet on April 16. Instead, a number of our members attended the April 11 public hearing about the National Park Service (NPS)'s proposed plan for Kenilworth Park at which the public was invited to share our thoughts and concerns about the proposal. There is much to be concerned about!

A year ago, NPS issued a report about the park's contaminated soil that concluded that it was no danger to anyone from contact with your skin or from breathing the air in the park, nor was it any threat to our groundwater or the natural environment. The report did conclude though that if you ate the dirt in the park for long enough—2 hours/day, 350 days/year, over 24 years to be precise—you theoretically would have an elevated risk of cancer. If you are eating dirt in the park every day for over 20 years, you might have a whole mess of problems in your life!

In any case, NPS spent the last year determining what ought to be done about this “problem” and recently publicized their proposed plan: **burying most of Kenilworth Park under another two feet of compacted soil**. They estimate that it would cost \$18million and take 2-3 years of truck traffic, noise, dust, etc in our neighborhood to complete the project. The project would inevitably limit public access to the park. At the end, it will still be unsafe to eat the fish you might catch in the park—they have much higher concentrations of the same chemicals (PCBs) that were found in trace amounts in the park's soil. This all seems destined for a legal battle: **NPS is determined to make DC taxpayers cover the cost of this dubious project**. Stay tuned.

On May 2, Mayor Gray shared his FY2014 budget proposal with the community at the Ward 7 Budget Town Hall Meeting. The good news is that the improving economy provided the city with an additional \$315million in tax revenues in FY2013 and is expected to increase city tax revenues by another \$314.3million in FY2014. There are a lot of items in the budget to be happy about, including \$414million next year for school modernization and construction. For our neighborhood though, there was some bad news: despite the new revenues DCPS is going through with its plan to temporarily **close Kenilworth ES next month in order to save \$280,567**.

Although it is not in the FY2014 budget, DPR still retains roughly \$13million from a past budget to build our community a **replacement recreation center co-located on public land with Kenilworth ES**. Because of the contamination in the park and other legal issues, rebuilding at the old site is not feasible. DPR is getting ready to issue a Request For Proposals (RFP) to design the new Rec Center. The process of designing a facility co-located with the school is complicated by the fact that DCPC plans to keep Kenilworth ES be closed at least until 2017, and DCPNI hopes to continue working in the school building in the meantime. We hope to keep meeting and voting there too, but this is all up DCPS. This all raises lots of questions.

DPR and DCPS will both speak at our May 21 meeting, so come and have your questions answered!

-The Eastland Gardens Civic Association Executive Committee

To request City Services, dial 311 or visit 311.dc.gov

MEETING REMINDER!

**EASTLAND GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
MONTHLY MEETING
TUESDAY, May 21, 6:30pm
@KENILWORTH ELEMENTARY**

Focus this month:

A Closed School and a New Recreation Center

What's going to happen with Kenilworth ES and what kind of recreation center will be built on the same site?

Guest Speakers:

- **John Stokes, Chief of Staff**
Department of Parks & Recreation
- **Shanita Burney, Director, Family and Community Engagement, District of Columbia Public Schools**

The Eastland Gardens Civic Association will continue to meet at Kenilworth Elementary on the 3rd Tuesday of each month

See you there!