

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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**TO:** All Councilmembers

**FROM:** Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Committee of the Whole

**DATE:** February 4, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Report on Bill 23-264, the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2020”

The Committee of the Whole, to which Bill 23-264, the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2020” was referred, reports favorably thereon with technical amendments, and recommends approval by the Council.

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**I. BACKGROUND AND NEED**

On June 4, 2019, Bill 23-264, the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2020,”<sup>1</sup> was introduced by Councilmembers Gray and Bonds to officially designate the Benning Park Community Center, located at Southern Avenue, S.E. and Fable Street, S.E. in Ward 7 as the Woody Ward Recreation Center. An official naming of a public space typically enables installation of signage.

Woody Ward was born on January 9, 1943.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ward attended Maryland State College which is now known as the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. He went on to play professional football in the then American Football League for the Buffalo Bills as the ninth draft pick. He was injured in 1967 game against the Houston Oilers that ended his professional football career. Mr. Ward then came to the District for rehabilitation of his injuries and began working with the

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<sup>1</sup> Originally introduced as the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2019”

<sup>2</sup> *Obituaries*, WASHINGTON POST, January 29, 2017.

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Over his time with DPR he worked at number of recreation centers including Benning Park Recreation Center where he worked for 26 years. He was witness to three generations of youth whose lives he impacted in his work as a football, baseball, and basketball coach over his 40-year career. He was revered at Benning Park Recreation Center and was a father figure for many children that spent time there. He greeted everyone with a smile and was let his kids know that everything was alright by saying “good show.”<sup>3</sup> Woody Ward passed away on January 3, 2017.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Legal Background***

The Street and Alley Closing and Acquisition Procedures Act of 1982, effective March 10, 1983 (D.C. Law 4-201; D.C. Official Code § 9-204.01 *et seq.*) (“Act”) establishes procedures for closing streets and alleys, opening new streets and alleys, and the naming of public spaces. Specifically, the Act authorizes the Council to designate or change the name of any public space in the District of Columbia.<sup>5</sup> Public spaces include “any public street, alley, circle, bridge, building, park, other public place or property owned by or under the administrative control or jurisdiction of the District of Columbia.”<sup>6</sup>

The Act establishes a notice requirement for the official designation of public spaces; at least 30 days prior to the scheduled public hearing, the initiator of the proposed designation shall submit a copy of the legislation for review and comment to each Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC”) in which the public space is located. Regarding Bill 23-264, ANC 7E was notified of the proposed name on October 28, 2019.

The Act also promulgates requirements that the Mayor must meet prior to consideration of a public space designation by the Council. First, the Mayor shall provide the Council with comments on the proposed designation submitted by any District agency with jurisdiction over the public space to be designated.<sup>7</sup> DPR, which has jurisdiction over the Benning Park Recreation Center attended the November 26, 2019 hearing on Bill 23-264 and submitted supportive comments as part of its testimony, thus meeting this requirement. Second, prior to consideration of a designation by the Council, the Mayor shall provide to the Council a surveyor’s plat showing the public space to be designated, including any adjacent and abutting squares to the designation.<sup>8</sup> The Office of the Surveyor provided the Council with a plat of the designation prior to the hearing of the Committee of the Whole which is attached to this report.

After the legislation becomes law and all conditions required by the Council and the Act have been satisfied, the Mayor will install signage denoting the public space name.<sup>9</sup> The signage

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<sup>3</sup> CER 22-22, Woody Ward Recognition Resolution of 2017.

<sup>4</sup> *Obituaries*, WASHINGTON POST, January 29, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> See D.C. Official Code § 9-204.01 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> D.C. Official Code § 9-204.11(2)(A).

<sup>7</sup> D.C. Official Code § 9-204.22(b).

<sup>8</sup> D.C. Official Code § 9-204.22(c)(1)-(3).

<sup>9</sup> D.C. Official Code § 9-204.24(b).

shall conform to the policies of the agency with jurisdiction over the public space, in this case DPR.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the Surveyor of the District of Columbia shall record a copy of the act and the Surveyor's plat in the Office of the Surveyor.<sup>11</sup>

Officially re-designating the Benning Park Recreation Center as the Woody Ward Recreation Center where Mr. Ward shaped so many lives will honor Mr. Ward's memory. Thus, the Committee of the Whole recommends the approval of Bill 23-264, the "Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2019."

## II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

- April 23, 2019 Bill 23-264, the "Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2019" is co-introduced at a Committee of the Whole Meeting by Councilmembers Gray and Bonds and is referred to the Committee of the Whole.
- April 26, 2019 Notice of Intent to Act on Bill 23-264 is published in the *DC Register*.
- October 25, 2019 Notice of Public Hearing on Bill 23-264 is published in the *DC Register*.
- November 26, 2019 A Public Hearing is held on Bill 23-264 by the Committee of the Whole.
- February 4, 2020 The Committee of the Whole marks up Bill 23-264.

## III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Ella Faulkner, Deputy Director of Administrative Services, Department of Parks and Recreation, testified that the Executive supports the proposed designation. Her testimony is attached as well as summarized below.

## IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

Commissioner Ebon Allen, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7E03, submitted testimony supporting the proposed designation.

## V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a public hearing on several bills including Bill 23-264 on Thursday, November 26, 2019. The testimony summarized below pertains to Bill 23-264.

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<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> D.C. Official Code § 9-204.24(c).

Copies of written testimony are attached to this report.

***Ebbon Allen, Commissioner, ANC 7E03***, testified in support of the proposed designation and described Mr. Ward's impact on his youth and clarified that the proposed designation is of the entire grounds and facilities of the existing recreation center.

***Jacqueline Minor, Volunteer, Benning Park***, testified in support of the proposed designation and discussed her work with him at the recreation center.

***Ella Faulkner, Deputy Director for Administrative Services, Department of Parks and Recreation***, testified that the Executive is happy to join in supporting Bill 23-264.

The Committee received no testimony or comments in opposition to Bill 23-264.

## VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Bill 23-264 has no impact on existing law. D.C. Official Code § 9-204.01 authorizes the Council to designate (i.e. name) any public space, including facilities.<sup>12</sup> Further, the Act generally provides that no public space shall be named in honor of any living person or in honor of any person who has been deceased less than two years.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Ward passed away in 2017.

## VII. FISCAL IMPACT

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2023 budget and financial plan to implement the provisions of the proposed legislation. DPR testified that fabrication of signage for the new park can be absorbed, as noted in the Fiscal Impact Statement (attached).

## VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

<u>Section 1</u>	States the short title of Bill 23-264.
<u>Section 2</u>	Officially designates the Benning Park Recreation Center as the Woody Ward Recreation Center.
<u>Section 3</u>	Adopts the Fiscal Impact Statement.
<u>Section 4</u>	Establishes the effective date by stating the standard 30-day congressional review language.

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<sup>12</sup> Street and Alley Closing and Acquisition Procedures Act of 1982, effective March 10, 1983 (D.C. Law 4-201).

<sup>13</sup> See D.C. Code § 9-204.05.

**IX. COMMITTEE ACTION**

**X. ATTACHMENTS**

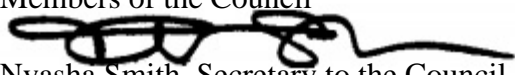
1. Bill 23-264 as introduced.
2. Written Testimony.
3. Surveyor's Plat.
4. Fiscal Impact Statement for Bill 23-264.
5. Legal Sufficiency Determination for Bill 23-264.
6. Committee Print for Bill 23-264.

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.**  
**Washington D.C. 20004**

Memorandum

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To : Members of the Council

From :   
Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

Date : April 23, 2019

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, April 23, 2019. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2019", B23-0264

INTRODUCED BY: Councilmembers Gray and Bonds

CO-SPONSORED BY: Councilmembers Grosso and T. White

The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee of the Whole.

Attachment

cc: General Counsel  
Budget Director  
Legislative Services

1   
2 Councilmember Anita Bonds

  
Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

3  
4 A BILL

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
6 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 To designate the Benning Park Community Center, located at Southern Avenue, S.E. and Fable  
9 Street, S.E. in Ward 7, as the Woody Ward Recreation Center.

10  
11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this  
12 act may be cited as the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2019”.

13 Sec. 2. Pursuant to sections 401 of the Street and Alley Closing and Acquisition  
14 Procedures Act of 1982, effective March 10, 1983 (D.C. Law 4-201; D.C. Official Code § 9-  
15 204.01), the Council designates the Benning Park Community Center located at Southern  
16 Avenue, S.E. and Fable Street, S.E in Ward 7, as the “Woody Ward Recreation Center”.

17 Sec. 3. Transmittal.

18 The Council shall transmit a copy of this act, upon its effective date, to the Director of the  
19 Department of Parks and Recreation.

20 Sec. 4. Fiscal impact statement.

21 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal  
22 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,

23 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

24           Sec. 5. Effective date.

25           This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the  
26 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as  
27 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December  
28 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of  
29 Columbia Register.



**To:** Committee Of The Whole  
**From:** Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7E SMD 7E03  
**Date:** November 22, 2019  
**Re:** Woody Ward Recreational Center Designation Act

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**Executive Summary** Mr. Woody Ward became a hero, father figure and role model for the constituents of The Benning Park Community. I fully support the Woody Ward Rec Designation Act:

The purpose of this testimony is to

**Background :** The constituents of Benning Park along with CM Vincent C. Gray wanted to present the Woody Ward Rec Designation Act to DC City Council. My constituents wanted to demonstrate the admiration and appreciation for Mr. Woody Ward by having his name placed at the front of the Benning Park Rec Center.

**The Importance as to why I am hear testifying today:** I am here today to show why I am in full support of The Woody Ward Designation Act. Mr. Ward passed away 3 years ago and my community has been affected from the loss. Mr. Ward saved, impacted and empowered so many lives within the Benning Park Community.

Benning Park Rec deserves to have a name in honor of man that inspired and impacted so many lives.

*The Benning Park Community is in dire need for transformation of the entire community. What better way to begin transformation by redeveloping a rec center and renaming the rec center after our hero Mr. Woody Ward.*

**Mr. Woody Ward's impact to the community is irreplaceable.**

*Mr. Ward welcomed me back to my old neighborhood with open arms to begin my basketball program for boys ages 12 to 17. Mr. Ward would always advise me to give back with a purpose and your community will return the favor.*

Benning Park will never be forgotten.

*The Benning Park family has been through many trials and tribulations. We have lost so many loved ones to mass incarceration and homicides. Mr. Woody Ward was there through those turbulent years. We know no other man that deserves the honor of renaming the Benning Park Rec Center than no other than Woody Ward.*

**I suggest that me being the elected leader of ANC 7E03 and one of the many sons that returned back to his community that the Committee of The Whole would vote unanimously to rename the Benning Park Rec Center The Woody Ward Rec Center. My community will forever be empowered and inspired by your vote to make changes for a better community.**

I appreciate the attention given to our concerns, and hope that we have your support for The Woody Ward Rec Designation Act.

Ebbon A. Allen

ANC 7E03

Good Evening All,

My name is Jacqueline ( Jackie) Minor. I'm emailing on behalf of the deceased Woody Ward, I've volunteered with Mr. Ward at Benning Park Recreation Center on an everyday basis for 16 yrs plus, As parent who raised five kids in the community and Benning Park Recreation Center I noticed Mr. Ward working alone for years and I decided to step in and give a helping hand. As you know our community was/ is a highly crime rated area and the children can be challenging but that did not stop Mr. Ward. He could handle in situation. He always stayed calm and humble as challenges with children and adults occurred such as fights, altercations or damages to the property. I observed Mr. Ward handling any obstacles that came his way in a very professional manner. As the years went by. I observed other DPR workers coming to work at the recreation center but couldn't handle the pressure and never came back, but Mr. Ward persevered. Mr. Ward taught my very own and other children in the community how to play basketball, soccer, t- ball and more. I observed some coming back to thank him as they headed off to colleges with full scholarships in basketball. Their very own words were " if it wasn't for you Ward I wouldn't have made it this far", with that being said Ward had an excellent rapport with the children and adults in our community. He always was generous and opened Benning Park Recreation to any partnership programs that reached out to do activities with our children and adults in the community. I know that Woody Ward loved teaching the children and supporting his community in every way because he faithfully drove an hour and 15 minutes to and from work everyday from Mechanicsville, Md to SE DC. Woody Ward deserves to have this recreation center in honor of his name, so I'm asking in all due respect that this happens as soon as possible. I would like for his wife to be a living witness, unfortunately she is very ill as I email you. Thank You In Advance, Ms. Minor I can be reached at [jacqueline.minor@dc.gov](mailto:jacqueline.minor@dc.gov) or ( 202) 883-0814

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**



Public Hearing  
on

Bill 23-172, the “Alethia Tanner Park Designation Act of 2019”  
Bill 23-264, the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2019”  
Bill 23-327, the “James E. Bunn Amphitheater Designation Act of 2019”

Testimony of  
Ella Faulkner  
Deputy Director of Administrative Services

Before the  
Committee of the Whole  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman

November 26, 2019  
Room 412  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Good morning Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee. I am Ella Faulkner, the Deputy Director of Administrative Services for the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). I am pleased to testify before you today in proud support of the proposed designations of three community assets within DPR's inventory; the park at 227 Harry Thomas Way, NE in Ward 5 currently called NoMa Green, the Amphitheater in Oxon Run Park in Ward 8, and the Benning Park Community Center in Ward 7.

DPR believes that the naming or renaming of public assets should include as robust of a community engagement process as possible. With regard to Bill 23-172, the "Alethia Tanner Park Designation Act of 2019, we applaud the NoMa Business Improvement District and NoMa Parks Foundation for their efforts in soliciting quantifiable, broad-based community support to garner public input on the future name of NoMa Green, just as they did in the naming of Swampoodle Park. Over two thirds of the more than 2000 survey participants voted to name the park "Tanner Park," in honor of Alethia Tanner. This 2.5-acre parcel, formally owned by Pepco, is north of New York Avenue and bounded by Harry Thomas Way NE on the west and the Metropolitan Branch Trail on the east. Currently under development by the NoMa Parks Foundation, the park will provide outdoor recreation and community gathering space and serve as NoMa's "backyard." The intentional creation of spaces like the NoMa Green is vital for the health and wellness of our residence as the District population grows.

Ms. Tanner, who was born a slave in Prince George's County, Maryland in 1781, purchased her freedom in 1810, as well as the freedom of at least 18 others. During her remarkable life, Ms. Tanner was a business woman, owned real estate, and was a supporter and sponsor of educational and religious institutions for the free African-American community in

Washington DC. In addition to supporting several schools for free African-American children, her entrepreneurial ventures included a produce stand in Lafayette Park, where her large clientele included President Thomas Jefferson. She also funded the education of family members, including her nephew, John Francis Cook, Sr., who founded Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. The legacy of Alethia Tanner is one that should be heralded in our city and we at DPR are proud to support Bill 23-172, the “Alethia Tanner Park Designation Act of 2019,” which would name the NoMa Green in her honor.

Moving on to Bill 23-327, the “James E. Bunn Amphitheater Designation Act of 2019”, we would note that Oxon Run Park is a jewel in Washington, DC’s crown of outdoor space. It is the home of the second largest cherry blossom tree grove in the District, the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center, and over three miles of trails. Oxon Run Park also boasts the only amphitheater in DPR’s inventory located east of the Anacostia River. Nestled within the park near Mississippi Ave and 13<sup>th</sup> Street, SE, the amphitheater is a beacon in the community much like its proposed namesake James E. Bunn,

James Bunn was a well-known businessman, former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, a driving force in the redevelopment of St. Elizabeths Campus, and the founder of Congress Heights Main Streets. As a longtime member of the Friends of Oxon Run Park, Bunn, as he was affectionately known, was instrumental in securing the park’s Cherry Blossom grove. DPR is happy to join in support of Bill 23-327 the “James E. Bunn Amphitheater Designation Act of 2019,” and in honoring James E. Bunn by naming the Oxon Run Amphitheater after him.

Finally, we are proud that Bill 23-264, the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2019” seeks to honor one of our own. Benning Park Community Center was first opened in 1971 and will be undergoing an \$11 million modernization in 2020. DPR and the Department of General Services (DGS) are currently working to review proposals for the project’s general contractor. When completed, Benning Park will have improved landscaping and upgraded storm water management, a refashioned entrance, a new elevator, along with other Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance measures, and a state-of-the-art fire safety and security system. We will also be updating the Center’s kitchen and boxing center. The modernization provides the perfect opportunity to effectuate the signage and data updates that accompany a renaming of this significance. If this bill moves forward, by this time next year we will be celebrating the grand reopening of the modernized Woody Ward Recreation Center.

In addition to being a former NFL Player and highly respected member of the community, Woody Ward was a dedicated employee at the Department of Parks and Recreation for 47 years. He was a fixture in the Benning Park Rec, serving at that site from 1988 to 2014, and founding the basketball league that still carries his name. Woody’s commitment to recreation and youth development has made an indelible mark on the DPR and Benning Park community, and his DPR family cannot think of a more fitting honor than renaming the center, which he dedicated much of his life to, in his honor.

We look forward to continuing our work with DGS, community members, and local leaders, as we aim to preserve these community assets and the legacies of these great Washingtonians for generations to come.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I am available to answer any questions that you or the committee may have.



# NAMING OF RECREATION CENTER

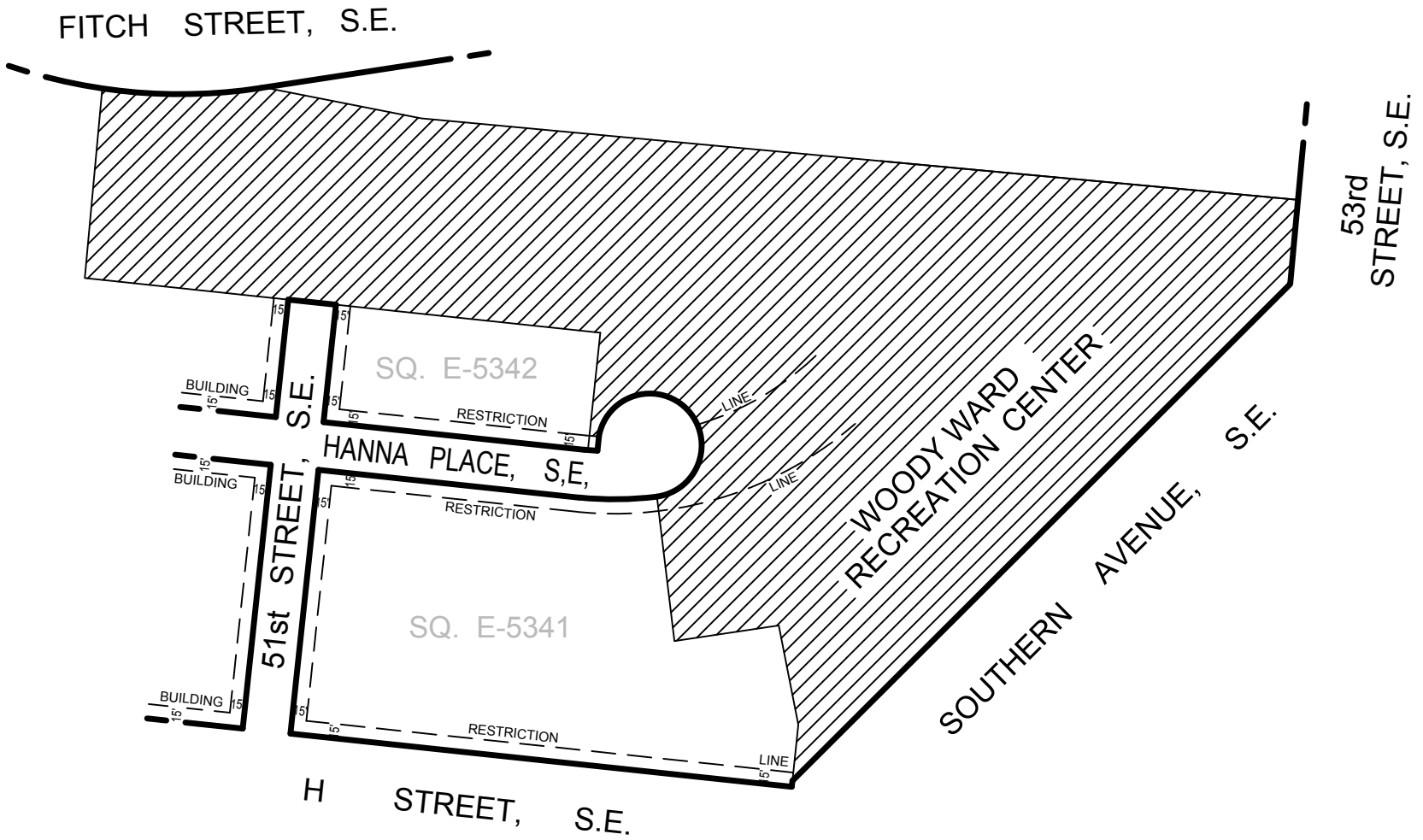
## WOODY WARD RECREATION CENTER SQUARE 5341 - E

PURSUANT TO D.C. LAW \_\_\_\_\_ EFFECTIVE \_\_\_\_\_,  
THE AREA SHOWN THUS:  IS HEREBY DESIGNATED AS  
"WOODY WARD RECREATION CENTER".

OFFICE OF THE SURVEYOR, D.C.  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2019

I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAT IS CORRECT AND IS RECORDED.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SURVEYOR, D.C.



SURVEYOR'S OFFICE, D.C.	
Made for: <u>B-23-264</u>	
Drawn by: <u>A.S.</u>	Checked by: _____
Record and computations by: <u>B. MYERS</u>	
Recorded at: _____	
Recorded in Book _____ Page _____	SR-20-0000
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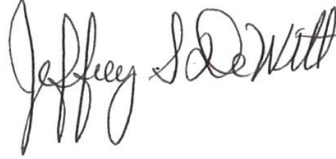
Government of the District of Columbia  
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



Jeffrey S. DeWitt  
Chief Financial Officer

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

**FROM:** Jeffrey S. DeWitt  
Chief Financial Officer 

**DATE:** January 29, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Impact Statement – Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2020

**REFERENCE:** Bill 23-264, Committee Print provided to the Office of Revenue Analysis on January 14, 2020

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**Conclusion**

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2023 budget and financial plan to implement the bill.

**Background**

The bill designates the Benning Park Community Center located at Southern Avenue, S.E., and Fable Street, S.E., in Ward 7, as the “Woody Ward Recreation Center”. The existing center is undergoing an \$11 million facility modernization and is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2020.<sup>1</sup>

**Financial Plan Impact**

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2023 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. Funding is available for new signage as part of the modernization project.

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<sup>1</sup> See Department of Parks and Recreation Capital Project QF4RC – Benning Park Recreation Center Rehabilitation, [https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/DC\\_2020\\_OCFO\\_Budget\\_Vol\\_5.pdf](https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/DC_2020_OCFO_Budget_Vol_5.pdf).

1 **DRAFT COMMITTEE PRINT**  
2 **Committee of the Whole**  
3 **February 4, 2020**

4  
5 A BILL

6  
7  
8 23-327  
9

10  
11 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
12  
13 \_\_\_\_\_  
14

15 To officially designate the Benning Park Community Center located at Southern Avenue, S.E.  
16 and Fable Street, S.E., as the Woody Ward Recreation Center.

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this  
18 act may be cited as the “Woody Ward Recreation Center Designation Act of 2020”.

19 Sec. 2. Pursuant to sections 401 and 422 of the Street and Alley Closing and Acquisition  
20 Procedures Act of 1982, effective March 10, 1983 (D.C. Law 4-201; D.C. Official Code §§ 9-  
21 204.01 and 9-204.22) (“Act”) the Council officially designates the Benning Park Community  
22 Center located at Southern Avenue, S.E. and Fable Street, S.E., as the “Woody Ward Recreation  
23 Center”.

24 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

25 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal  
26 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,  
27 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

28 Sec. 4. Effective date.

29 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the  
30 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as  
31 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December  
32 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code §1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of  
33 Columbia Register.