

Council of the District of Columbia

MEMORANDUM

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

TO: Chairman Phil Mendelson
FROM: Councilmember Janeese Lewis George *Janeese Lewis George*
RE: Request to Agendize Measures for the May 7, 2024 Legislative Meeting
DATE: May 2, 2024

I request that the following measures be agendized for the May 7, 2024 Legislative Meeting:

- **Lafayette Elementary School Grass Field Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2024**
- **Lafayette Elementary School Grass Field Emergency Amendment Act of 2024**
- **Lafayette Elementary School Grass Field Temporary Amendment Act of 2024**

As part of the Lafayette Elementary School modernization project in 2015-2016, the Department of General Services planned to remediate any damage caused by locating the modular swing-space on the school's athletic field ("lower field"), and by the school's use of the adjacent Department of Parks and Recreation field ("upper field"), as well as alleviating any issues with stormwater runoff between the fields. Unfortunately, due to poor design and inconsistent maintenance, the issues with stormwater runoff have persisted since the conclusion of the modernization project, causing significant erosion problems throughout the park and school property. In 2023 DGS visited the site and committed to remediating the problem with the Lafayette-Pointer Water Mitigation and Field Replacement Project.

On March 13, 2024 DGS and DCPS [announced the decision to replace the lower field at Lafayette Elementary with a synthetic turf field](#). This decision was made without first engaging or informing the community about the use of a synthetic turf field, despite repeated calls from stakeholders – including my office and ANC 3/4G – for greater transparency. DGS is required by the Safe Fields and Playgrounds Act of 2018 (D.C. Code § 10-171.03(h)) to conduct community outreach prior to replacement of any public field or playground surface, which must include gathering input on the materials to be used. Not only does the agencies' failure to gather community input prior to making this decision violate the public trust, it reneges on specific commitments DGS made during the modernization project to maintain a grass field at Lafayette. These commitments, and the agencies' failure to engage the community, are detailed in two ANC 3/4G resolutions titled [Lafayette Field Resolution February 26, 2024](#), and [Lafayette Field Resolution March 25, 2024](#).

Members of the community have raised serious concerns about installing a synthetic turf field at Lafayette, which deserve to be taken seriously. At community meetings, ANC meetings, on online forums, and on a change.org petition, community members have detailed their concerns about exposure to PFAS chemicals, the use of materials that get dangerously hot during the summer, and the severity of injuries on synthetic turf fields. The community's concerns about exposure to PFAS chemicals are particularly pressing; according to the EPA, "the more we learn about PFAS chemicals, the more we learn that certain PFAS can cause health risks even at very

low levels. This is why anything we can do to reduce PFAS in water, soil, and air, can have a meaningful impact on health” (<https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>). In response to these concerns, in 2022 the city of Boston banned the installation of any new artificial turf fields.

It is essential that the Council act by emergency to stop DGS and DCPS from installing a synthetic turf field, and instead require that the remediation project continue with the installation of a natural grass field at Lafayette Elementary.

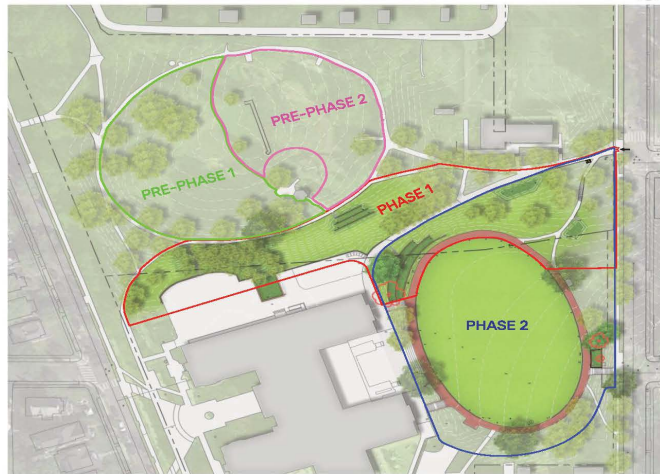
DRAFTS of the emergency declaration and emergency/temporary acts are attached, as well as diagram showing the upper (phase 1) and lower (phase 2) fields. Please contact Tosha Skolnik at nskolnik@dccouncil.gov with any questions.

- cc: Members, Council of the District of Columbia
- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the General Counsel
- Office of the Budget Director
- Mayor’s Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs



LAFAYETTE-POINTER WATER MITIGATION & FIELD REPLACEMENT PROJECT

STORMWATER IMPROVEMENT PLAN



LEGEND	
PRE-PHASE 1	Green line
PRE-PHASE 2	Pink line
PHASE 1	Red line
PHASE 2	Blue line
ENTRANCE	Black arrow
TRUCK WASH AREA	Yellow rectangle

WMMP LAFAYETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND LAFAYETTE-POINTER PARK

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@dcdgms

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