

Interim Report on Dupont Circle Resource Center Lease, Maintenance, and Renovation



Photo via Flickr (MV Jantzen)

The Dupont Circle Resource Center sits at the corner of 9 Dupont Circle NW, or Reservation 59. Built as a National Park Service (NPS) “comfort station” in 1930, the building fell into disrepair. In the late 1990s, the Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA) spearheaded a fundraising drive to renovate the facility to become a community Resource Center and office for the ANC. The ANC committed approximately \$3000 to the project at that time. The ANC and NPS entered into a lease in 1998 for no rent, renewable every two years. The initial construction costs and ongoing cleaning and maintenance served as the ANC’s consideration for the space. The Resource Center also serves as a substation for NPS Police and Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). The ANC has subsequently provided access to the Resource Center to Historic Dupont Circle Main Streets (HDCMS), DCCA, Dupont Circle Village, Freshfarm Markets, and others.

Lease Renewal

The ANC voted in Summer 2011 to negotiate a new, no-rent renewal of the lease, which had not been formally renewed in some years (or perhaps ever). In October 2011, representatives of the NPS verbally agreed in principal to a 5-year renewable, no-rent lease and asked the ANC to draft the language to bring the lease up to date. The consideration for the new lease would be continued upkeep by the ANC. The ANC and NPS should be able to finalize and sign a new lease renewal by the end of 2011 or early 2012.

Cleaning

The ANC is responsible under the existing lease arrangement for regular interior upkeep. The NPS provides very limited cleaning and trash removal, as well as exterior upkeep. In September 2011, the ANC voted to engage a cleaning company for a so-called "blowout" clean, and in October 2011 voted to engage weekly cleaning services, as well. Other organizations that use the building -- including HDCMS and Freshfarm Markets -- have committed to pay for a fair portion of the cleaning costs. The "blowout" clean took place in October 2011.

Necessary Repairs

Wear, tear, and lack of regular maintenance have taken its toll on the building, which sees a surprising amount of foot traffic and use during the week. Below are two pages that provide photos of some of the most obvious damage -- which includes the following:

- counter chipping;
- kick damage on all doors;
- broken fan;

- missing fan chains;
- missing toilet paper dispensers;
- chipping paint (interior and exterior);
- rust on the exterior gate;
- exterior lighting outages;
- four missing downspouts;
- water and chip damage around a non-ADA-compliant sink;
- unhinged south bathroom door;
- attic screen tearing away from building;
- loose front door latch; and
- broken exterior electrical box.

These items need to be addressed as quickly as possible, as deferred maintenance issues. The west gutter was also coming apart from the building, due to winter snow. The gutter has already been repaired and paid for by the ANC as an emergency measure.

Avoiding Future Maintenance Issues

There are several upgrades to pursue in order to avoid many of these same repairs in the future. These include:

- kick plates on all doors;
- wall corner plates flanking the front door;
- durable counter surfaces;
- more secure front door latch;
- downspouts that are securely fastened to the wall;
- hose rack to keep the hose from quickly deteriorating; and
- storage closet that can accommodate larger items like tents, tables, and chairs.

Renewal of the Space for Better Community Use

In addition, there are several upgrades that could help make the space more conducive to community use -- as reflected in the two attached renderings.

Previously, the center space was cluttered with a old desks, cabinets, and other materials. The ANC, MPD, NPS, and HDCMS have moved out this furniture and cabinetry and consolidated files and other stored materials. Now that this space is free, the Center can be set up to easily convert between working tables, a larger board table, and a community meeting setup.

The following upgrades would help the Center better serve the community:

- A set of three modular tables and stackable chairs would allow the Center to serve as work space, community group meeting space, police substation, and small public meeting venue -- and to be able to convert easily between these functions.
- A built-in set of cubby holes and a larger exterior mailbox would make mail and package intake more convenient for the various groups that use the Center as a home base.
- The under-counter cabinetry could be re-configured to create a total of five built-in workstations (rather than three), facilitating additional use by community groups. The renderings below also show matching hanging cabinetry.
- Interior shutters on the windows would make the Center an easier place to work during certain daylight hours.

- Replacing the drinking fountain with a space for a miniature fridge would serve police substation purposes and eliminate the fountain noise that disturbs work.
- Improved signage can better indicate how the Center serves many community entities, and also lessen confusion about the building's street address.

Building Security

It appears the building's keypad entry code has never been changed in over 10 years. Perhaps over a thousand people have received access during this time, if not more. The current alarm system is not functional and obsolete, so is never used. With new technology, a replacement entry/security system can be installed that uses an individualized code for each organization or entity that uses the space. The entry code lets a person into the building and simultaneously turns off the alarm system. An online account tracks all of the entries over time.

Future Ideas for Exterior Use & Upgrades

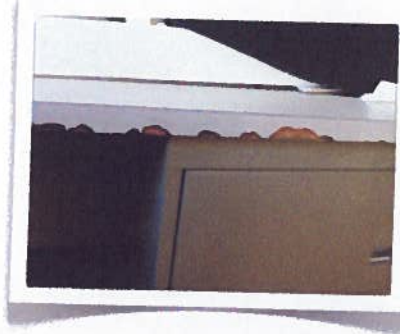
The exterior space could also be upgraded or reconfigured to enliven this block and facilitate greater connection between the Resource Center and the community. This could include:

- Cafe-style tables and chairs on the plaza;
- Installation of a free WiFi hotspot; and/or
- Re-landscaping to facilitate outdoor gatherings, classes, or community gardening.

Photos: Interior Repairs Needed



Loose door latch & door area kick damage



Counter chipping



Electric fan broken



Kick damage on bathroom doors



Obsolete & non-functional alarm system



Water damage, counter chipping, & non-ADA sink



Bathroom door off hinges



No TP dispenser



No TP dispenser

Photos: Exterior Repairs Needed



Exterior lights not functioning
(over door & windows)



Electrical box damage



Downspouts missing



Exterior rust & paint damage
(wrought iron gate)



Exterior kick & paint damage
(door, door frame, & window
frames)