

# The Francis Field Flyer

Serving the West End Neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

May 2020: Social Distancing Number

## Despite Distancing, Empty Field Struggles

Not all the wear and tear on Francis Field comes from over-use. Because of the Covid 19 situation, the field was officially closed by the District of Columbia government on April 2, 2020, until further notice.

At that time, the playing field was once again in poor condition, with much bare dirt, as shown in the photograph at right, taken 11 days later, on April 13. This was due mostly to over-permitting by one D.C. department, and under-maintenance by another during the 2018 and 2019 spring and fall playing seasons.

The permitting issue was addressed at a meeting with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) on December 4, 2019, during which documentation was presented by the Friends of Francis Field (FFF) to show that adult sports teams using the field during those seasons had many more participants than DPR's permit regulations allowed.

DPR responded on March 13, 2020, with a well-reasoned, revised schedule for the upcoming spring season. It gave priority to the two public schools in the area, rather than to adult leagues.

That schedule was for the current season that has now been cancelled. The suspension would have been a good opportunity to plant grass, and still may be. DPR and its new director, Delano Hunter, have acted responsibly on

the permitting problem, but DPR is not the department that is responsible for Francis Field's inadequate maintenance.

That is the D.C. Department of General Services, which awards the work to private businesses in multi-year



Francis Field, photographed on April 13, 2020; closed 11 days.

## Voting by Mail Is Critical In June 2 Council Election

Our West End Neighborhood will play a large part in the election of a new Ward 2 representative in the Council of the District of Columbia. Due to the resignation of Jack Evans, who served in that office for nearly three decades, there is a large field of candidates.

This is an important office, with a term of four years. Because of the Covid 19 virus, most voting will be by mail. This is a first here.

Eight candidates will be on the ballot. Due to party registration numbers in the District, this race

will be settled for all practical purposes in the Democratic primary on June 2. The general election will be held on November 3.

Despite his resignation related to ethics charges, Jack Evans is one of the candidates in the primary. Another is Patrick Kennedy, who is currently the chair of the Advi-

contracts. The contracting companies are hired and paid, not only for mowing, but also for replanting grass every year, fertilizing seasonally, aerating the packed-down soil, and other routine care.

A preliminary investigation by FFF in 2018 showed that the contract holder for Francis Field's maintenance was, and continues to be, Fort Myer Construction, which has many other contracts with the District government.

Fort Myer hires subcontractors to maintain Francis Field and other facilities that are included in the same contract. The work being delivered appears to need further attention. See more on this story on the FFF website.

## FFF and ANC-2A on May 20

"Virtual" meetings using Zoom software technology have been held in March and April by Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A, and another will be held on May 20, at 7:00 pm. You can watch it on the Internet and participate, or you can listen and participate by phone.

Friends of Francis Field has requested time on the May agenda to update the ANC members on recent events. Our own annual meeting, usually held in April or May, has been postponed until October because of the Corona virus.

Please mark your calendars and hold the date and time. See details at: [www.anc2a.org](http://www.anc2a.org), and on the FFF website: [www.friendsoffrancisfield.org](http://www.friendsoffrancisfield.org).



*Continued on Reverse*

# “Rebecca Coder Park” Part of New Agreement

## *Committee Formed to Sponsor Naming Legislation*

In partnership with the District government, Friends of Francis Field (FFF) will improve and continue to landscape the small section of the field designed in 2007 for passive recreation.

It is shown in the graphic at right, with a photograph and a detail of the recently approved “revised master landscape plan” for the field.

The concept of removing the previous chain-link fence around the athletic field, and opening a part of it to neighbors, was championed by Rebecca Coder (1969-2018), the first president of FFF.

Even before her death—two years ago this May—many of us referred to the circular sidewalk that was constructed as part of the 2009 landscape plan as “Coder Circle.”

In the new agreement with the Department of Parks and Recreation, FFF will remove from that area a large and obsolete water valve, fill holes, plant additional trees, and add flowering shrubs. The object is to make it more park-like, as it was planned.

All of this will be done with private funds and with no expense to the District’s taxpayers. That concept, too—public and private cooperation—was something Rebecca believed in and encouraged.

After she was elected to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission in 2008, she supported the modernization of the West End Library in an innovative program that also included condominium and rental housing in the same new building.

She helped to usher that project through the complicated regulatory process with style and grace. Her mem-

## City Council Election, June 2

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sory Neighborhood Commission that serves the West End and Foggy Bottom neighborhoods.

A Georgetown ANC commissioner, Kishan Putta, is running; as is John Fanning, chair of the Logan Circle ANC. Other candidates also have visibility in their own neighborhoods. Ours does not have one of the two polling places that will be open in Ward 2.

Mail ballots must be requested from the Board of Elections by May 26, so voting takes some planning.

Each of the 8 wards in the city has one Council member elected by that ward’s voters. Five others are elected at large. Ward 2 includes Georgetown, Dupont Circle, Foggy Bottom, the West End, Shaw, Logan Circle, Chinatown, Kalorama, and other neighborhoods.

As a non-partisan, charitable organization, FFF makes no election endorsements. Please see the Board of Elections website. The FFF website also contains information and links to the forms necessary to request a ballot.

ory was honored by the Library of the District of Columbia in 2019 with a plaque at that bright, new West End branch.

The DPR-FFF agreement, which will run until December 31, 2022, also provides language that would name this passive recreation area as “Rebecca Coder Park.”

That will require the approval of the Mayor and the District Council. A committee has been formed to spon-



sor that legislation and raise the funds for implementation of the plan and for on-going maintenance.

While no additional signage—or the renaming of Francis Field—is contemplated, a small brass plaque, 10 x 4 inches, would be placed at sidewalk level, or slightly above, near one of the trees that Rebecca and other volunteers planted in 2017 with the Casey Tree Foundation.

More details on the planned Rebecca Coder Park are on the FFF website: [www.friendsoffrancisfield.org](http://www.friendsoffrancisfield.org).

## Friends of Francis Field

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This PDF edition is condensed from the more comprehensive FFF website, which is updated with new developments.  
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