

## Debra Thompson

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**From:** niccole olsen <niccoleolsen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 08, 2019 11:18 AM  
**To:** Assembly  
**Subject:** Community Center Concerns (to be read at the next meeting)

(please read the following letter aloud at the next meeting)

Dear Mr. Mayor and Assembly Members,

I am writing to you again today to voice my concerns over the proposed age changes to the Community Center. I attended the meeting on Friday, August 2nd, where community members were invited to be apart of the discussion for the new proposed age restrictions at the Community Center.

It was brought to our attention that the main cause of concern is that a younger child in the facility without an adult accompanying them, may be the victim of some sort of harassment or abuse. There is plenty of data and research out there that says that most child abuse victims will be abused in their homes, by someone they know....not in a public facility, by a stranger.

There was also concern voiced over a potential lawsuit against the Borough if something like this were to happen. Mr. Geisbrecht was asked about the lawyer creating a waiver to release the liability of the Borough and the Parks and Rec Department, and he said he was still waiting to hear back from the lawyer on that.

I have a few points that were brought up at the meeting, that I would like the assembly to be aware of as you consider taking action against this matter.

- The proposed age change WILL NOT make my 7 year old son any safer in the locker room. If I am the adult who is accompanying my son to open swim he will still be in the locker room without me, for **no more or no less time** than if he were to go to open swim by himself.
- It was asked of the Community Center staff and director if they knew what kind of monetary impact this would have on the Center, to eliminate an entire user group, and they did not know the answer. I would expect that figure would significant. I was able to attend open swim twice with my children this summer, during the afternoon open swim time, and I would say the majority of the children there were under the age of 12, without an adult.
- When I did attend those open swim times, there were very few children there who were over the age of 12...from my viewpoint, most kids seem to lose interest in open swim by the time they reach that age.
- It is detrimental to the health and well being of our children any time we take away a physical activity source.
- There are children in this town who use the community center as an escape from difficult home-life situations. Where do these children go if the community center is no longer available to them?
- There were several suggestions brought up at the meeting for inexpensive ways to make our facility safer.

1. Implement a simple video monitoring system. I understand there are cameras already in place and the budget was adjusted to account for the extra expense for installing the fiber optic cable. I also understand the monitoring screens will be moved to be more easily viewed by staff.
2. Install a simple intercom system into the locker rooms so that if someone is in danger/trouble they can call out.
3. The staff needs to do a better job of regularly monitoring the locker rooms. There should be locker room checks done at a minimum of every 30 minutes.
4. The staff needs to do a better job of securing access points. It was brought up that the doors have been left unlocked and unauthorized individuals have gained access to the facility. It doesn't cost anything to lock the doors.
5. The director needs to move her office to a more prominent location to have more of a presence in the facility.
6. It was suggested that staff wear uniforms so that they are easier to identified.

If the Borough feels the need to implement a strict age, then make the age 7. Students at this age are in 1st grade and have had a solid year of appropriate Community Center behavior through the school's swimming program. They've had "stranger danger" type education in school. And it is already the allowable age to attend open swim.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Niccole Olsen