

## **Debra Thompson**

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**From:** niccole olsen <niccoleolsen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 27, 2019 3:36 PM  
**To:** Assembly  
**Subject:** Parks and Rec changes

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Mr Mayor and Assembly Members,

I'm writing to you today to voice my concerns over the upcoming changes to the Parks and Recreation Community Center.

It was brought to my attention, through word of mouth, that there would be a new age restriction put in place for children wishing to use the facility without an adult.

I reached out to Chandra, the Parks and Rec director, and we had a string of emails that went back and forth.

She has referenced that they are trying to "ensure that they are covered under liability and the law". It is my understanding that there is no borough or state "law" that dictates when a user is old enough to enter a public facility, unattended. There are no age restrictions to access the public library or harbor docks. There isn't an age restriction for the ballfields or playgrounds. Why the change to the Community Center? It is one of the few dry, safe, public spaces in this community for kids to have access to.

She said the litigious world we live in, and how many people and attorneys view municipalities as an open check book has been the "reason" behind the change.

I don't believe that the fear of being sued is an acceptable reason to eliminate an entire user group from the facility.

She also referenced 7 different fitness and pool facilities in the state and their age restrictions, but 2 of them are private clubs and 4 others only had age restrictions on the pool and only 1 had an age restriction for the entire facility itself.

If the cause for concern is water safety then they should implement a swim test.

If the concern is locker room safety then increased monitoring by facility staff is necessary.

If the concern is guests entering the facility and not checking in then a simple video check in system could be installed.

If the concern is kids hanging out and are being disruptive or misbehaving then implement a discipline system. Notify the parents and suspend their access to the facility for a reasonable amount of time.

I'm frustrated that as a tax paying member of this community and user of the facility that there wasn't more room for community input or suggestions.

We currently have a 7 year old son who attends open swim, without an adult, several times a week. My husband and I are both working parents- our child would not be able to attend these swim times when the new age restriction takes place.

On the few times that I have been able to make it to the open swim sessions this summer I would say the majority of the attendees are under 12 and without an adult.

I worry that by restricting the access of the facility that these kids will end up losing interest by the time they are allowed to use it.

I would like to ask the assembly to please consider taking action against this proposed age change.

Thank you for your time,  
Niccole Olsen

Sent from my iPhone