

Theodore LIPSCOMB

Milwaukee County Board Chairman
County Supervisor, 1st District

DATE: March 7, 2018

TO: Director Nicole Brookshire, Office on African American Affairs

CC: Parks Chair Jason Haas and Parks Vice-Chair Marcella Nicholson

FROM: Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Requesting review of Milwaukee County policies in accordance with the objective of the Office on African American Affairs

I'm writing to follow up on my prior written inquiry of January 15, when I asked if the Office on African American Affairs (OAAA) had established a process for reviewing policy decisions or legislative requests by the Administration, and to let you know that a written informational report on a specific program area has been referred to the Committee on Parks, Energy and the Environment.

The January announcement by the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture that it would close the David F. Schulz Aquatic Center for 2018, later rescinded subsequent to County Board action (file 18-160), drew attention to what I believe could be significant racial disparities in public access to Milwaukee County aquatic facilities. I spoke to these concerns during the January 25 meeting of the Committee on Finance and Audit.

All residents of Milwaukee County should enjoy equal access to our aquatic facilities for their use and enjoyment, whether for recreation or for learning the life-saving skill of swimming. Nevertheless, a map of Milwaukee County's pools, aquatic centers, and splash pads, available on the Parks Department web site (see attachment), appears to provide a visual representation of currently existing racial disparities in access to our aquatic facilities.

Working with the Milwaukee County Executive, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors established policy guidelines and objectives for the OAAA (files 15-636 and 16-342). Those guidelines include (but are not limited to) promoting equal opportunities for African Americans, providing recommendations for changes in County programming that disparately impact African Americans, and reviewing county legislation or regulations that would affect the African American population.

In accordance with these policy guidelines your office has been requested to review and analyze the equality of access to Milwaukee County's aquatic facilities, and provide policy recommendations to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for addressing any disparities that your office identifies.

Additionally, please include in your report an explanation of what processes your office has established, or plans to develop, for the review and evaluation of policy decisions or legislative requests by the Administration or the County Board, in accordance with the objectives and charge of your office.

