

## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members of the Board of Appeals for Montgomery County

CC: Francoise M. Carrier, Hearing Examiner  
Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings  
Community Liaison Council

FROM: Craig Piercy, LFSC CLC Representative  
Little Falls Swimming Club  
P. O. Box 5579, Washington, DC 20816-1179

DATE: January 11, 2014

RE: BOA Case No. S-289-B Little Falls Swim Club

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Condition 17 of the BOA Decision of May 18, 2005 (effective June 8, 2005) requires that the Little Falls Swimming Club (the Club) submit annually to the Board of Appeals (BOA) the minutes of the meetings of the Board's Community Liaison Council (CLC) meetings, a record of all concerns brought to the attention of the attention of the Club during the year, and a status report on the implementation of the Club's implementation of the Board's decisions. The following is submitted in compliance with that requirement.

A: Minutes of the 2013 Meetings for the Community Liaison Council, including the Minutes of the June 2013 Open Board meeting which served as the 2<sup>nd</sup> CLC meeting.

## **CLC MEETING MINUTES**

**The first 2013 meeting of the Little Falls swimming club community liaison committee was held on Wednesday, May 22, 2013.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Susan Hostetler, Donna Yesner, Nancy Pindus, Mike Larue, John Wileman

Also attending from the Board of Directors was Erica Wildman. We began the meeting by taking a walk through of the pool grounds. We noticed that there were several Laurel bushes on the berm around the shed on the southeast end of the pool that have dried out or need to be replaced. John Wileman noted that the screening needs to be replaced around his house

There are two trees within the pool perimeter that have significant dead branches that need to either be pruned or chopped out. These are by the southeast corner of the pool and the diving well.

We then toured the tennis courts. In the area between the fence and the tennis court fence we noted at least one White Pine that was at the end of its lifespan.

There's also a small dead tree that's in a harness at the net of court one that needs to be replaced. Moving further toward River Road, there are two dead Hollies (or rhododendrons) by court one by the alley that need to be replaced.

There is one big dead pine tree between courts one and two the needs to be removed.

It was also noted that there is trash on the courts that needs to be removed.

At the end of the tennis court closest to River Road, there are significant invasive grapevines that are covering up lots of bushes there.

Finally, headed back on the creek side of the tennis courts there are at least three or four Arbor vitae that have died. They look like recent plantings.

Finally, it was noted that one of the exhaust stacks on the main pool building roof is leaning.

Once we returned to the pool area, we spent some time discussing the master planning exercise that the Board of Directors has undertaken to give the CLC a preview of what the board will present to the membership at its annual public meeting in June.

The CLC adjourned at about 8:45 PM

Board members present:

Bonnie Norman

Craig Piercy

Nancy La Vigne

Bob Scribner

Jon Slabaugh

Tamar Nicholson

John Crupi

Rob Danegger

Others present:

Dave Almy, chief architect

Chuck Montrie and Teri Tomlin, Bethesda Aquatics

A collection of pool members.

- I. Pool board president Bonnie Norman introduced herself and invited board members and other member attendees to introduce themselves. A pool member requested paper communications of events, news, to be posted or otherwise available at the pool.

Action: Pool Board Secretary and Communications Chair will ensure communications are accessible via hard copy.

- II. The May pool board meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

- III. Presidents report

The recent rescue of a 12-year-old child was handled exceptionally well. Colleen Hamm, pool manager, and Abby Fry, lifeguard, were both on the scene and handled the rescue and resuscitation. By the time the EMS team arrived the child was alert and stable. He has been invited back to the pool for swimming lessons.

Tamar Nicholson shared the results of a drive through with the fire chief with regard to the best route and entry point to the pool in the case of an emergency. The chief had a strong preference of pulling to the bridge from Little Falls Drive but not crossing it (the bridge is not wide enough) rather than using the alley, which may be blocked by cars, shrubs, and other obstructions.

The president recognized the hard working board on all the new initiatives in which the board is engaged.

- IV. Discussion of the master plan

About two years ago the board got together to discuss the future of the pool, it being 50 years old. The board retained architect Dave Almy, who has extensive experience with the county in developing master plans for pools in this area. Examination of the pool over the winter determined that it is good for 5 years but it's hard to say how much longer. When

building a new shell it opens the opportunity to explore other potential improvements. Last year we invited input from members, which was synthesized and presented to Dave, who then developed three different options. This is the initial first round of what we can do. The top right hand corner included option "0" represents what would be required to replace the pool shell and comply with all the code requirements, including expanding the diving well, adding a zero grade entry for the baby pool, and making the bath house ADA compliant. Option 1 does all that plus expands the pool to 8 lanes, and adds a toddler pool along with a new baby pool with zero entry and expanded decks. Price tag is \$1.5M. Option 2 creates a "leisure wing" that includes underwater benches and play equipment but no new toddler pool. It also adds storage space to bath house. Option 3 is all of the above including a new bath house, expanding deck and parking lot, and adding a pavilion.

Again, these are options for members to consider so the board can learn what they like and what they don't like; this feedback will be synthesized into a preferred or recommended option from the board.

The four designs currently under consideration will be posted in the pool area and members will be invited to provide comments by a certain deadline, which will be used for a second round of planning.

In terms of timing, the board is not trying to quickly, but rather deliberately; it takes time with the county re: permits, etc. Five years will go by quickly.

David Almy clarified that Options 1-3 actually add two lanes to the pool, expanding it from 6 to 8 lanes. He also shared that we've had several meetings, including with the county. The pool is in a flood zone, which is a sensitive issue because we can't impede any water flow that would come down over the pool grounds; we can redirect it, but not much. He also reminded those present that Little Falls exists due to a special exception; as it stands now it violates county setback rules. However, the county seemed unconcerned about that and generally supportive of the renovation.

A member asked whether the Options include a vision of expanded membership, in that expanding the pool might justify increasing membership. Tamar indicated that we may be able to add 20-30 members. But to be clear, the surface area of the pool has nothing to do with membership.

Another member asked is the pavement area will be expanded. Dave Almy replied that it depends on the option. Option 3 is unlikely to be approved due to its size and impact on the flood plain. Question: is it an option to use a more permeable surface? It's hard to say, but by way of example, the gravel parking lot is considered impermeable. Observations: making the parking lot smaller could be a problem for the neighborhood.

The pavilion is likely a nonstarter due to proximity to residents and size.

Almy: in Option3 the grassy area was reduced to add parking spaces due to bath house coming out. So that would affect existing picnic benches.

Question: in the past there have been proposals to remove the concrete culvert in the creek – was that mentioned in the county meeting? No, not mentioned.

Question: can the diving well be moved back toward the creek? Almy: it's possible but the current pool is already past the county set back line and the retaining wall would need to be removed and rebuilt. A former board member noted that when the pool did the landscaping a few years ago the county would now allow any activity beyond the retaining wall that runs along the creek.

Question re: what a renovated or moved bath house would entail. Can it go up a level? Almy: only if you wanted to add an elevator to be ADA compliant.

Question: what is a pavilion? Four to six posts holding up a roof. It can have a floor. It is a shade structure. It can be screened.

Question: how many homes are adjacent to the pool and how many of those households are members? The answer is 4-5. All are members. But the entire neighborhood is affected.

The board reasserted that it is aiming for a consensus-based process that includes outreach to the community and invites ample input.

Question: all three options removed a lot of sitting area; why aren't we expanding the fence to the walkway along the foot path to the foot bridge to create more sitting areas? Almy: that's a possibility as long as it's used for green space. But it could be perceived as dangerous/too narrow for kids to navigate on foot or bike.

Question: the leisure wing seems to have a lot of angles and curves; does that create cleaning and maintenance problems over time? Almy: no, that's a common design. The curves don't adversely affect the maintenance of the pool.

Question: would any of the options require more life guard chairs? Almy: more water requires more life guards. So for example the toddler pool would need a life guard. It's designed as a teach area – it can go as deep as 3 feet.

Question: can drop slide for the kids be added? Almy: Yes, River Falls has done it. So has Bethesda. It's very popular.

A member underscored that we need to be cognizant of all the people in surrounding area who voted yes to having the pool redone 50 years ago. So we need to be sensitive to that and not encroach on their properties. We should also seek opportunities to add more green screens.

Question: What is the plan for financing the renovation? Pool board secretary Andy Gefen explained that we are working on how much we would pay from reserves, how much we would borrow from bank, how much we would increase dues, and how much we would finance through an assessment. We can increase or decrease any of these parameters. However, interest rates are low so we may want to act fast.

Question: what about share value? There's no incentive to older folks to get out of the system. Needs to be in relationship to the value of property . The current cost of membership is less than it was 50 years ago after adjusting for inflation.

Board member Craig Piercy explained that that's one reason we created the senior emeritus pass. But evaluation becomes challenging. But if we value it more and additional members leave, our reserves go down. We need to consider that among many other options.

Question: who should rightfully pay for the renovation? Should members today pay when the improvements will not be enjoyed until several years from now? Those members should be the ones who should pay – whoever is a member at that time. Board members acknowledged that this is a good question that should be considered as financing plans are further developed.

The master plan discussion concluded with a heartfelt thanks from the pool board president to Dave Almy.

### III. Membership

Membership chair Jon Slabaugh shared that membership has wound up for the season. It started late because of the late date of the annual meeting and never really caught up due to delinquent members. 20-25 people were really hard to track down; not overseas, not infirmed, just nonresponsive. Recommend holding the annual meeting earlier in January, shorten the dues payment response time, and only giving one late payment reminder.

Membership data:

19 new associates this year

50 resignations versus 27 last year; and increase of 23. And we had 23 people take the senior emeritus program.

31 associates moved to full members.

Number of active members is at 67% but once we move associated to full members then 75% of full members will be active, which is high.

Down to 78 inactive members versus 108 from last year.

The waiting period – average of 7.2 years.

Looking forward, the median wait time will go to 9 years by 2015.

Number of kids in pool is dropping. See it in swim team and dive team. It is going to have an adverse impact on the pool community.

There's only room for 17% of the eligible families in the catchment area. Perhaps shrink the catchment area?

Mohican changed its bylaws to say that shares are not an investment. Stripped voting rights for those who were inactive for more than four years.

Started garnering support from the swim team families – biggest users of the pool.

Could explore valuating shares based on when the share cost was places. But it would take a lot of effort to figure out how to do it equitably.

Mohican learned that when the assessment became real there was a huge turnover. Right now our resignation rate is 7 percent.

Action item: the board book needs to be updated – it's not worth printing. The minutes go through 2009. Schedules through 2010. Etc. Very out of date.

### III. Communications

The new MemberSplash system is up and running. Check in is working. Everyone is in the system. Senior emeritus is included to discount passes. Soon we'll be able to get the flow of people coming in and using the pool. Everybody has to check in – adult and child alike.

Membership coordinator and book keeper have both learned it and are using it well.

The guards like it a lot but the internet connection is not reliable. We have Verizon and they only run DSL here. We did try using the cable so it's not MemberSplash. Could purchase an on demand hot spot for \$29 per month. Or tap into the Wileman's wifi.

Action: need a cost-effective back up plan for internet access.

Tamar and Carol were trained on the new website

Three phases:

Check in

Web site migration

Member ability to alter data. Next year they can pay for passes and events and even next year's membership fee through site via PayPal.

Clarification: free guest passes for board members means that a board member family member needs to be present when the guest is using the pool

### IV. Buildings and Grounds

Bonnie Norman met with landscaper, who will plant some hostas and add some wood chips that should work with no gutters.

Action: ask landscapers to trim the weeds along the tennis courts.

Umbrellas were recently repaired.

#### V. Treasurer's Report:

Tennis courts, coping stones, and ADA lift are the biggest recent expenses, which we are moving to capitalized expenses. Generally on target with our budget thus far.

#### VI. Bethesda Aquatics:

Need to make an adjustment to the contract to accommodate the transition to payroll and market adjustment that was made last year for coach's salaries but didn't carry over into the new contract. Additional amount is \$3,000

This covers the salaries of the swim team head coach, assistant coach, and two pre-team coaches along with the two dive team coaches.

Board approved the transfer to \$3k to Bethesda Aquatics.

Discussed whether the coaches' salaries should be in the contract or be in a separate reimbursable account. For this year it's done.

Need to prepare board for non-local coaching salaries in the future.

New heat pump is working well.

Birds have found other homes.

Diving board will be delivered this Thursday morning.

Member sign-in system has gone so smoothly. Prompts better attention of front desk staff.

The save was a test and should give us great confidence in our lifeguard staff and Bethesda Aquatics. Bonnie Norman acknowledged Bethesda Aquatics for its fine vetting of pool staff and excellent training of guards, both of which no doubt contributed to the successful rescue.

Bethesda Aquatics intends to order a new pool cover - \$10k. The current one is completely shredded. Average life span is 10-15 years. A cover is required to protect the plaster finish on the pool and extends the life of the white coat. Also enables you to keep the water in the pool over the winter: a drain and clean costs about \$3k. The board voted in favor of replacing the pool cover.

#### VII. Swim and Dive

156 kids registered and a few more forthcoming

88 swim team

28 pre-team – huge volume, really exciting and entirely positive feedback to date. Had a new parents meeting that went well. Trying to keep the lines of communication open.

37 dive team

#### VIII. CLC

Discussed the master plan with the CLC. They were happy to be included, interested in the plan, appreciated that they were included first.

#### IX. Social

Mexican dinner Saturday night.

Board voted to set the member cost of party at \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door, with free entry for board members but not their spouses.

## **CLC MEETING MINUTES**

**A meeting of the Little Falls swimming club community liaison committee was held on Wednesday, July 31, 2013.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Susan Hostetler, Mike Larue, Craig Piercy representing the Board

The meeting began at 7:45 PM and was held on the pool deck.

We discussed the difficulty in recruiting members of the CLC to participate in meetings. There seem to be consensus that the pools neighbors were being adequately communicated to by the pool board and that electronic communication like the pool list serve gives people information without having to physically attend meetings.

We then moved into a continuation of the discussion that was held at the June board meeting regarding our master planning exercise. We discussed how the recent inspection of the pool shell show that it still had a few years of life left, and that we had time to determine exactly in what form we would consider a pool renovation. On behalf of the board, I reiterated our intention to ensure that the neighbors of the pool hear about any developments related to the master planning process first before they are released to the community.

Then we moved into a discussion of the buildings and grounds, and some of the landscaping issues that we are trying to address. We focus specifically on the poison ivy around the tennis courts and in other areas of the surrounding grounds.

I then provided a review of the electronic membership registration system that the board had implemented earlier in the season. We discussed how it helps with access control and that the data from the system would be valuable in understanding pool usage patterns, and would potentially help us at some point in the future when we want to consider proposals for different management membership structure.

The meeting adjourned around 830